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THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

# HUSKERS

ILLUSTRATED

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CHAMPIONS**

**NU DEFEATS MICHIGAN,  
EARNS OUTRIGHT TITLE**





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## BLACK FRIDAY FOR HUSKERS LEAVES MANY QUESTION MARKS

TWO YEARS AGO, I SAT IN THE POSTGAME INTERVIEW ROOM UNDER THE SOUTH STANDS AT KINNICK STADIUM LISTENING TO THEN-NEBRASKA COACH BO PELINI TALK ABOUT HOW PROUD HE WAS OF HIS TEAM FOR FIGHTING BACK FROM A 17-POINT THIRD-QUARTER DEFICIT TO DEFEAT IOWA 37-34 IN OVERTIME AND SEEMINGLY SAVE HIS JOB.

Two days later he was fired by Nebraska Athletic Director Shawn Eichorst following his sixth-straight nine-win season for his teams not playing well enough in big games. Since then, NU is now 15-10.

On Saturday, a somber Mike Riley sat in the same chair peering out at Nebraska media at a loss to explain how his team had gotten dominated in all aspects of the game for the second contest in a row on the road this season.

"We got beat in all phases of the game," Riley said. "So, we're all responsible for that."

With the 40-10 loss, Nebraska drops to 9-3 on the season. The good vibes that were flowing in Husker Nation after the first 7-0 start since 2001 are suddenly being replaced with the here we go again feeling of more missed opportunities at finally turning the corner.

One could make the argument that NU is simply getting worn down emotionally and physically – injury after injury at key positions piling up to the point where the Huskers on Friday were a shell of the team they were five weeks ago at Wisconsin when they were still unbeaten.

"We are not going to make the injuries at quarterback an excuse," Riley said.

Every team is beat up the 13th week of the college football season, but few teams still had an opportunity to play in their conference championship game with a few things going their way.

With that hope still out there with a victory over Iowa, one would have thought



the Nebraska football team would have come out more inspired, say like they had two years ago when Pelini's job was arguably on the line. NU was down 24-7 to Iowa midway through the third quarter two years ago before Armstrong threw four touchdowns passes to lead NU back.

Afterwards Pelini called it "one of the 'gutsiest performances I've seen from a quarterback in a long time.'"

On Friday, there was no such repeat performance by a hamstrung Armstrong, now a senior, as he misfired on long pass after long pass and finished 13 of 35.

After being outgained by 152 yards in the first half, the Huskers were down 26-3 early in the third quarter. Armstrong's lone touchdown pass to Stanley Morgan Jr. with 7:47 left in the third quarter cut the deficit to 26-10. That's all the Huskers could muster this year – the next two drives went three and out. NU's defense, which had been a sieve in first half, eventually let Iowa in for two more scores, including an eight-minute drive in the fourth quarter to seal the rout and drop Riley to 0-2 against the Hawkeyes.

Depending on if you are a glass half full or half empty person, NU is either no further along than they were two years ago under the former staff or they are headed in the right direction with a chance to still win 10 games with a bowl victory.

Armstrong talked to his teammates after the Iowa loss about changing the culture and having new leaders step up to make sure NU can keep building in the right direction and not take another step back with a loss in the bowl game.

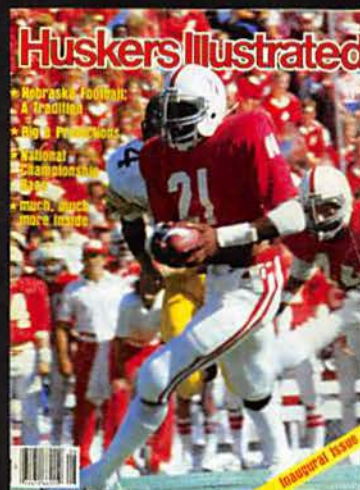
A bowl victory and signing many of the talented high school players currently committed to NU, could send NU into the offseason with the same momentum they had this year and make the decision to hire Riley still look like a good one.

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Editor, General Manager: **DARREN IVY**  
darrenivy@huskersillustrated.com

Photographer: **JOE MIXAN**

Photographer: **JIM RASH**

Photographer: **MITCH OTTO**

Photographer: **KEN JUSZYK**

Photographer: **REGGIE RYDER**

Recruiting Writer: **MIKE SCHAEFER**

Beat Writer: **MICHAEL BRUNTZ**

Beat Writer: **KEVIN HOUCK**

Beat Writer: **SHANE G. GILSTER**

Contributing Writer: **BOB HAMAR**

Contributing Writer: **TERRY DOUGLASS**

## ADVERTISING

Shane G. Gilster at (402) 742-0125  
or Tim Francis (859) 278-3474

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**The next Huskers Illustrated edition, featuring the bowl preview will mail on Monday, Dec. 12.**

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BY MICHAEL BRUNTZ

Following blow out loss to Iowa, Huskers have a lot of work to do during the next month to leave positive vibe about this season.

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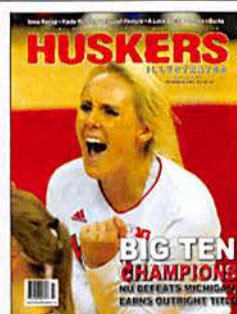
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After losing to No. 2 Minnesota in five sets, Nebraska was able to return home on Saturday and defeat Michigan and then get help from the Gophers to win the title outright.

### 2016 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME	TV/SCORE
SEPT. 3	FRESNO STATE	MEMORIAL STADIUM	7P.M.	W, 43-10
SEPT. 10	WYOMING	MEMORIAL STADIUM	11A.M.	W, 52-17
SEPT. 17	OREGON	MEMORIAL STADIUM	2:30P.M.	W, 35-32
SEPT. 24	@NORTHWESTERN	EVANSTON, ILLINOIS	6:30P.M.	W, 24-13
OCT. 1	ILLINOIS	MEMORIAL STADIUM	2:30P.M.	W, 31-16
OCT. 15	@INDIANA	BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA	2:30P.M.	W, 27-22
OCT. 22	PURDUE	MEMORIAL STADIUM	2:30P.M.	W, 27-14
OCT. 29	@WISCONSIN	MADISON, WISCONSIN	6P.M.	L, 23-17 OT
NOV. 5	@OHIO STATE	COLUMBUS, OHIO	7P.M.	L, 62-3
NOV. 12	MINNESOTA	MEMORIAL STADIUM	6:30 P.M.	W, 24-17
NOV. 19	MARYLAND	MEMORIAL STADIUM	11A.M.	W, 28-7
NOV. 25	@IOWA	IOWA CITY, IOWA	2:30P.M.	L, 40-10

ALL GAMES ARE CST



### ON THE COVER

Redshirt freshman Olivia Boender celebrates a point for the Huskers during Saturday's four-set victory over Michigan. With the Nebraska win and Wisconsin loss to Minnesota, the Huskers (18-2) won the outright Big Ten Conference championship for the first time since 2011. The Huskers are now headed to the NCAA tournament to try and defend their 2015 national championship.

PHOTO BY REGGIE RYDER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED





# RECRUITING NOTEBOOK

BY MICHAEL SCHAEFER

RECRUITING EDITOR

HUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM

## December is important time for NU recruiters

Nebraska football turns its attention to recruiting now, as the Huskers will have two weeks in December to visit recruits on the road and host official visitors as well.

Here's a quick snapshot of Nebraska's recruiting class:

### THREE KEY COMMITS

1. Avery Roberts – He remains the jewel of the class and there was nothing on his senior film to signal otherwise. The linebacker is an early enrollee and he'll get to Lincoln with the opportunity to carve out a spot on special teams or even in the linebacker rotation given the graduations of guys like Josh Banderas and Michael Rose-Ivey. This was a big recruiting win for Nebraska.

2. Deontre Thomas – The Iowa game showed the Huskers have to get better defensively in the trenches and Thomas is the most exciting of the team's four committed defensive line prospects. The defender could play outside, but the Huskers will likely bulk him up some and turn him loose inside where he could help against the run and provide a pass rush.

3. Keyshawn Johnson – Talent wise he might not be in the top three, but Johnson is very important with what the Huskers are doing because of how he lends respect to Mike Riley. The Huskers haven't been as successful in California, but the fact there is even a Calibraska brand speaks to Johnson and his dedication to the team. This really can't be over looked.

### BIGGEST SURPRISE

Perhaps the biggest surprise in the recruiting class might've



Wide receiver Joseph Lewis is one of NU's top targets.

came when Nebraska landed Deiontae Watts after the Oregon game. He's known as a run stuffer and someone who could get after the quarterback. He's taken a few other visits, but John Parrella seems fine with that mentality, as long as the recruits let him know.

### BIG DISAPPOINTMENT

Unfortunately there's a few different ways this one could go, but of late the biggest disappointment has been the lack of commitments or even just the lack of momentum for Nebraska. The Huskers started 7-0 but finished with just one commitment during the regular season, despite hosting 31 official visitors. There's still plenty of hooks out there, but at some point Nebraska has to start reeling in these fish.

### BEST STAFF MOVE

One of my favorite things Nebraska has done in this class is bust out custom made shirts for recruits. Nebraska staff wore custom shirts for Matt Sichterman in May and for Joseph Lewis on his unofficial visit in August. The shirts were a hit for Sichterman and Lewis even

commented in August that he was impressed how many different members of the staff wore the shirts as a sign of support. It's really the little things that can help push Nebraska over the top at times.

### CLASS SLEEPER

Nebraska's sleeper might be Reese Leitao, a tight end, who we simply don't talk about enough. The athletic offensive player hails from Oklahoma and committed to Nebraska in August. The Huskers are going to need to replace three tight ends next year, and while it's a stretch to think Leitao could come in right away, he could eventually be a long-term answer for what will be a key position as NU transitions its offense.

### TOP THREE TARGETS

1. Joseph Lewis – The aforementioned Lewis is Nebraska's top target and there's reason to believe there is some momentum for the Huskers with the five-star wide receiver. Nebraska can offer early playing time, plus Lewis loves what Keith Williams brings as an assistant coach. The biggest issue will be distance, as nearby USC

is surging and just minutes from Lewis' Inglewood home.

2. Foster Sarell – Definitely a long shot but Nebraska has to play the string out here and see what happens. Sarell is the nation's No. 1 recruit and because of circumstance, likely has the best relationship with Mike Cavanaugh out of anyone recruiting him. He'd also be a day one starter. Perhaps, it'll pay off for the Huskers?

3. Damion Daniels – There are bigger names for Nebraska to land, but Daniels is a recruit the Huskers need in the middle of their defensive line. At 6-foot-3, 325 pounds, Daniels is big enough to fill the middle and force teams to commit multiple blockers. Nebraska can't win the Big Ten if it can't control the point of attack.

### TOP RECRUITER

Could go with a number of guys, but going to lean toward an unconventional pick and choose Tavita Thompson. The graduate assistant isn't able to go on the road, but he still snagged two commitments for the tight end position. There's an NCAA measure out to potentially add another assistant coach, hard pressed to imagine Nebraska finding a better candidate than one in-house with Thompson.

### BOLD PREDICTION

Well I've already made a crystal ball prediction for Joseph Lewis, so it can't get much bolder than that prediction. If the Huskers land Lewis it would be the team's highest rated commitment since Baker Steinkuhler. If Nebraska wants to win championships, Lewis alone won't be enough, but it's a good start.h. **N**



BY MICHAEL BRUNTZ

# STATE OF THE HUSKERS

## Nebraska looking to future after Iowa loss



Read daily Husker reports from Michael Bruntz at [HuskersIllustrated.com](http://HuskersIllustrated.com)  
Follow him on Twitter @[michaelbruntz](https://twitter.com/michaelbruntz)

The good feelings around Nebraska's 2016 season came to a four-hour thud in Kinnick Stadium as the Huskers were whipped in every way by an Iowa team with less to play for.

Holding an outside shot at advancing to the Big Ten title game with a win, and a Wisconsin loss to Minnesota, the Huskers played uninspired, sloppy football that some felt had been left in the past. Not so.

Much like a year ago, Nebraska walked off the field following a head-scratching effort against Iowa. A year ago, the Hawkeyes used a few big runs and Nebraska miscues to escape Memorial Stadium with a win, while this season, the Huskers were dominated from the opening snap – out of sync on offense and struggling to stand up to Iowa's physicality on defense.

The Huskers headed back to Lincoln knowing they will have another game to play – maybe in Florida or Nashville – but understanding there is still plenty of work to do before heading to warmer environs.

Nebraska's coaching staff will have already hit the road recruiting by the time this column makes its way to your doorstep, and perhaps more importantly, Nebraska has bowl practices that will help to reshape things going into the 2017 season.

For the first time since Nebraska entered the Big Ten, the Huskers will have a quarterback competition this spring. Tanner Lee, Patrick O'Brien and early enrollee Tristan Gebbia will be your quarterbacks this spring, but first, the bowl practices will be big for getting Lee and O'Brien acclimated to Nebraska's offense.

"We have to evaluate our personnel," offensive coordinator Danny Langsdorf said after Friday's game. "That was a big thing we had to do coming here, and probably a little different – especially at the quarterback with the three we'll have at quarterback, compared with the three we have now.

"Guys up front will be further along in the run game that we want to get to, and every-

thing going into year three will be stacking our experiences, getting the young guys more time to learn, it will look different."

A year ago, Nebraska took advantage of bowl practices to give young and redshirting players opportunities to scrimmage that set the tone for the bowl game and the spring. Nebraska would have its full team practice in preparation for the bowl game, and then focus on the younger players, giving them reps running Nebraska's offense and defense that aren't possible during the regular season.

Next year on offense alone, the Huskers will be breaking in a new quarterback, a new starting running back, new tight ends and several new wide receivers. The Huskers will also be counting on redshirting offensive

linemen to provide depth and competition with this year's group.

Langsdorf said he is eager to get to work on building depth and getting O'Brien and Lee up to speed in how Nebraska's offense will look next season.

"I'm excited for (O'Brien) and Tanner to get more work in the bowl practices," Langsdorf said. "It's good for us that we can take some extra time as we are getting our current team to play, we'll have extra time with those young guys."

One by one, Nebraska's players and coaches headed down the Kinnick Stadium tunnel and headed for the waiting buses. This

November felt different from last year – no upset over a Top 10 team and less momentum heading into the end of the season.

The Huskers limped into the finish, getting blown out by Ohio State on the road and wilting against the Hawkeyes.

Nebraska's four-game improvement in the regular season is certainly significant, but there is much more work necessary over the next month to get the program back on better footing.

"We're a work in progress," Langsdorf said. "Every team is different, but I think we made some big strides from last year and we have a lot more work to do. That's out in front of us."

**This November felt different from last year – no upset over a Top 10 team and less momentum heading into the end of the season. The Huskers limped into the finish, getting blown out by Ohio State on the road and wilting against the Hawkeyes. Nebraska's four-game improvement in the regular season is certainly significant, but there is much more work necessary over the next month to get the program back on better footing.**



Iowa 40, Nebraska 10



Brandon Reilly lays out for one of many overthrown balls from quarterback Tommy Armstrong Jr.

# Missed opportunities haunt Huskers

## All phases of the game let NU down in 40-10 defeat

Story by Kevin Houck • Photos by Jimmy Rash

**T**he Huskers headed to Iowa City needing a win to keep their Big Ten West Division title hopes alive with also needing help from Minnesota on Saturday in its road contest against Wisconsin.

Quarterback Tommy Armstrong Jr. clearly wasn't fully healthy struggled mightily to connect with open receivers. Meanwhile, the defense allowed a trio of first half big plays to dwindle their Big Ten title hopes early.

The Hawkeyes capitalized on those big plays behind a dominant defensive performance in what ended up a 40-10 loss for the Huskers on Friday.

"In all different fashions it was very disappointing," Nebraska Head Coach Mike Riley said. "It's very obvious what happened. We gave up big plays and couldn't sustain anything early and then on special teams we lost in field position so there wasn't any phase of the game that felt very good today."

What started out as a defensive-dominated game by both teams changed in a span of two plays.

Iowa running back Akrum Wadley took a stretch handoff to the left but cut back through the middle to run untouched for a 75-yard touchdown with 4:55 left in the first quarter. Nebraska cornerback Joshua Kalu came around the outside to block the extra point to keep the score at 6-0.

After a three-and-out by the Huskers, the Hawkeyes immediately scored on a touchdown from quarterback C.J. Beathard to wide receiver Riley McCarron on a slant route over the middle

for a 77-yard score.

Those two-consecutive plays were Iowa's longest rushing and passing plays of the season. The Hawkeyes came into the game as the 121st-ranked team in the nation in total offense but torched NU for 196 total yards in the first quarter.

"What was ironic is back-to-back run plays. One in the run game and one in the pass game. It was kind of like *deja vu*," defensive coordinator Mark Banker said when asked about the similarities of last year's matchup.

Nebraska responded and marched into the red zone before stalling to send out kick Drew Brown for a 35-yard field goal with 9:57 left in the second quarter to cut Iowa's lead to 13-3.

The Blackshirts again allowed the big play on the next drive. Iowa running back LeShun Daniels cut through the left side for a 56-yard run down to the Husker eight-yard line. Two plays later, Daniels scored from four yards out to make it 20-3 with 7:59 left in the half.

Iowa ended the first half with 289 yards of total offense in which 208 yards came on three plays.

"I think sometimes we didn't have all of our cutback players there and they found a crease and just hit it," safety Nate Gerry said. "We just got to go find ourselves again. We knew that we were beating ourselves obviously, the three touchdowns they had their guy went untouched. We just have to find ourselves again. There were times we did and there were times we didn't."

Again Nebraska put itself in a hole to start the second half.





Nebraska senior running back Terrell Newby returned from what appeared to be a gruesome knee injury to run for 39 yards.

The Husker offense went three-and-out and then Desmond King returned the punt for 44 yards including a late hit penalty to set up Iowa at the Husker 13-yard line.

The Hawkeyes capitalized on great field possession with a one-yard touchdown pass three plays later from Beathard to tight end George Kittle. Iowa missed the extra point, but NU was called for offsides. Beathard was stopped on a designed quarterback run for the two-point conversion to keep the score at 26-3.

Nebraska responded with a 14-play, 75-yard touchdown drive. Armstrong found wide receiver Stanley Morgan Jr. over the middle on fourth-and-10 with 7:47 left in the third quarter for the 13-yard score to cut the deficit to 26-10.

The Blackshirts started to pick up the pace. They stopped Iowa two possessions in a row to set the offense up at its own 10-yard line back-to-back drives. But nothing came of either drive and the Huskers were forced to punt twice.

Later, the Hawkeyes faced fourth-and-8 less than a minute into the fourth quarter at the Husker 31-yard line. Instead of trying a field goal, Iowa went for it and Beathard found tight end Noah Fant at the first down marker to convert.

The Blackshirts were able to force a field goal but Gerry was called for running into the kicker to give Iowa a first down.

Three plays later, Beathard connected with Kittle for a six-yard touchdown to increase the lead to 33-10 with 11:13 left in the game.

Daniels would cap off the next drive for the Hawkeyes with a -yard touchdown run with 1:55 remaining in the game.

Iowa outgained the Huskers in fourth quarter time of possession 12:12 to 2:48.

"It's hard to assess the whole picture after that performance," Riley said. "We will go on, get a bowl game and feel good about that but there's not a great feeling about this season at this point."





Tommy Armstrong Jr. grimaces in pain as he is brought down by an Iowa tackler while trying to run the ball.

## Injured Armstrong relatively ineffective

STORY BY TERRY DOUGLASS | PHOTO BY JIMMY RASH

**D**espite Nebraska's offensive struggles, head coach Mike Riley didn't use his team's injuries at the quarterback position as an excuse following a 40-10 loss at Iowa.

Tommy Armstrong Jr., who sat out Nebraska's 28-7 home victory over Maryland on Nov. 19 due to a hamstring injury, returned to the starting lineup against the Hawkeyes.

Armstrong was perhaps the Huskers' healthiest option at quarterback as backup signal-caller Ryker Fyfe broke a bone in his left (non-throwing) wrist against the Terrapins and had surgery the next day.

"I think that Iowa had as much to do with it as anything," Riley said of Ne-

braska's offensive woes. "Now certainly, Tommy probably wasn't 100 percent, nor was Ryker and all that. But with the overall picture of what it looked like today, we can't come close to using that as a reason or excuse."

Armstrong finished 13 of 35 passing for 125 yards with a touchdown and no interceptions. Normally a threat in the running game, the senior rushed six times for 13 yards against the Hawkeyes.

Armstrong gained two yards on a draw on Nebraska's third offensive play and admitted that he wasn't encouraged afterwards.

"I did as much as I could when I had to run here and there and got what I could, but a hamstring is just so iffy when it comes to playing and being out there and not know-

ing exactly how much you can do," Armstrong said. "It was just something I was going to have to tough out."

Riley said he considered removing Armstrong from the game, but indicated that he wasn't certain Fyfe would be the best option with his injured wrist.

"I don't know if he was the healthiest, but did I think about it? Yes," Riley said of benching Armstrong. "Did I wonder why? Yes. I'm not sure that it would've made a difference.

"Ryker probably was a little further behind Tommy as being ready, so that was it."

Prior to the game, Armstrong said he told his coaches he "could do everything."

"As we got closer into the game and we started doing more and more, I think my leg started giving out on me," Armstrong said.





Iowa's George Kittle makes one of two touchdown catches in front of Kieron Williams.

# Defense gives up too many big plays

STORY BY TERRY DOUGLASS | PHOTO BY JIMMY RASH

**A**n Iowa offense previously thought to be deficient in the big-play department suddenly developed quick-strike capability in the Hawkeyes' 40-10 victory over Nebraska.

After producing only five plays of 50-plus yards in its first 11 games, the Hawkeyes had three plays go for 56 yards or longer in the first 21 minutes. They needed just a combined 3:11 to produce three first-half touchdown drives while building a 20-3 lead over the Cornhuskers.

While hesitant to jump to any conclusions before looking at film, Nebraska defensive coordinator Mark Banker said some of the Huskers' biggest breakdowns were obvious.

"You over-pursue," Banker said. "Our backside pursuit at times over ran the ball and that's where the big plays came from."

Running back Akrum Wadley started the scoring with a cutback run to find nothing but open field and tie his career long with a 75-yard touchdown sprint.

On the first play of Iowa's next possession, quarterback C.J. Beathard connected with wide receiver Riley McCarron over the middle for a 77-yard touchdown pass and Iowa led 13-0 with 3:28 remaining in the first.

With Iowa leading 13-3, running back LeShun Daniels broke loose for a 56-yard run to the Huskers' eight-yard line and scored on a four-yard run two plays later, increasing Iowa's lead to 20-3 with 7:49 to play in the second quarter.

Iowa was averaging just 163 yards rushing per game coming in, but had 264 against Nebraska. The Huskers were ranked No. 25 nationally in rushing defense (129.8 yards per game).

"The bottom line we didn't play how we played all season," Nebraska linebacker Josh Banderas said. "We didn't play our kind of football."

After getting stung by big plays early, Banker said Nebraska's defense improved in the second half.

"I thought Iowa showed good physicality," Banker said. "They were able to get five yards a crack at least on first downs. At times we became a one-level defense, which hurt us."

"Backside players weren't able to scrape up over the top and weren't able to make the tackle."



# Iowa 40, Nebraska 10

Nov. 24, 2016 at Kinnick Stadium in Lincoln

Attendance: 69,814

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	Total
Nebraska	0	3	7	0	10
Iowa	13	7	6	14	40

Qtr	Time	Scoring Play	V-H
1st	04:55	IOWA - Wadley, Akrum 75 yd run (Duncan, Keith kick blockd), 2-80 0:51	0 - 6
	03:28	IOWA - McCarron, Riley 77 yd pass from Beathard, C.J. (Duncan, Keith kick), 1-77 0:11	0 - 13
2nd	09:57	NEB - Brown, Drew 35 yd field goal, 10-66 4:13	3 - 13
	07:49	IOWA - Daniels, LeShun 4 yd run (Duncan, Keith kick), 4-69 2:08	3 - 20
3rd	12:40	IOWA - Kittle, George 1 yd pass from Beathard, C.J. (Beathard, C.J. rush failed), 3-13 1:15	3 - 26
	07:47	NEB - Morgan Jr., S. 13 yd pass from Armstrong Jr. (Brown, Drew kick), 14-75 4:53	10 - 26
4th	11:13	IOWA - Kittle, George 6 yd pass from Beathard, C.J. (Duncan, Keith kick), 12-44 6:15	10 - 33
	01:55	IOWA - Daniels, LeShun 1 yd run (Duncan, Keith kick), 13-45 8:10	10 - 40



Nebraska's Joshua Kalu blocks an Iowa extra point in the first quarter.





Senior Nathan Gerry warms up for the Huskers with a skeleton mask on under his helmet.



Jordan Westerkamp gets hit hard after making a catch for the Huskers.

## Team Statistics

	NEB	IOWA
<b>FIRST DOWNS</b>	17	13
Rushing	6	7
Passing	8	5
Penalty	3	1
<b>NET YARDS RUSHING</b>	90	264
Rushing Attempts	31	47
Average Per Rush	2.9	5.6
Rushing Touchdowns	0	3
Yards Gained Rushing	100	281
Yards Lost Rushing	10	17
<b>NET YARDS PASSING</b>	127	144
Completions-Attempts-Int	14-37-0	10-15-0
Average Per Attempt	3.4	9.6
Average Per Completion	9.1	14.4
Passing Touchdowns	1	3
<b>TOTAL OFFENSE YARDS</b>	217	408
Total offense plays	68	62
Average Gain Per Play	3.2	6.6
Fumbles: Number-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties: Number-Yards	8-57	7-70
<b>PUNTS-YARDS</b>	10-364	5-206
Average Yards Per Punt	36.4	41.2
Net Yards Per Punt	28.2	39.6
Inside 20	1	3
50+ Yards	0	2
Touchbacks	0	0
Fair catch	2	1
<b>KICKOFFS-YARDS</b>	3-184	7-440
Average Yards Per Kickoff	61.3	62.9
Net Yards Per Kickoff	34.7	40.6
Touchbacks	0	3
Punt returns: Number-Yards-TD	3-8-0	6-82-0
Average Per Return	2.7	13.7
Kickoff returns: Number-Yds-TD	4-81-0	3-80-0
Average Per Return	20.2	26.7
Interceptions: Number-Yds-TD	0-0-0	0-0-0
Fumble Returns: Number-Yds-TD	0-0-0	0-0-0
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time	26:52	33:08
1st Quarter	8:32	6:28
2nd Quarter	8:00	7:00
3rd Quarter	7:32	7:28
4th Quarter	2:48	12:12
Third-Down Conversions	5 of 18	3 of 13
Fourth-Down Conversions	2 of 2	3 of 3
Red-Zone Scores-Chances	2-2	4-4
Touchdowns	1-2	4-4
Field goals	1-2	0-4
Sacks By: Number-Yards	2-13	1-10
PAT Kicks	1-1	4-5
Field Goals	1-1	0-0





Above: Nebraska's players come onto the field at Kinnick Stadium before the Iowa game. Left: Marcus Newby bears down on Iowa quarterback C.J. Beathard.

## Individual Statistics

### Nebraska

Rushing	No.	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
Bryant, Tre	11	41	0	41	0	11	3.7
Newby, Terrell	10	39	0	39	0	7	3.9
Armstrong Jr.	6	13	0	13	0	6	2.2
McNitt, Luke	2	4	0	4	0	2	2.0
Pierson-El, D.	1	3	0	3	0	3	3.0
Fyfe, Ryker	1	0	10	-10	0	0	-10.0
Totals	31	100	10	90	0	11	2.9

Passing	C-A-I	Yds	TD	Long	Sack
Armstrong Jr.	13-35-0	125	1	19	0
Fyfe, Ryker	1-2-0	2	0	2	1
Totals	14-37-0	127	1	19	1

Receiving	No.	Yards	TD	Long
Westerkamp, J.	4	50	0	19
Bryant, Tre	4	8	0	6
Morgan Jr., S.	2	28	1	15
Pierson-El, D.	1	16	0	16
Reilly, Brandon	1	16	0	16
Carter, Cethan	1	7	0	7
Newby, Terrell	1	2	0	2
Totals	14	127	1	19

Punting	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	In20	TB
Lightbourn, C.	10	364	36.4	47	1	0
Totals	10	364	36.4	47	1	0

Returns	Punt			Kickoff			Intercept		
	No	Yds	Lg	No	Yds	Lg	No	Yds	Lg
Pierson-El, D.	3	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bryant, Tre	0	0	0	1	29	29	0	0	0
Nelson, Jordan	0	0	0	3	52	19	0	0	0
Totals	3	8	4	4	81	29	0	0	0

Field goals	Qtr	Time	Dist	Result
Brown, Drew	2nd	09:57	35 yards	Good

Kickoffs	No.	Yards	Avg	TB	OB
Brown, Drew	3	184	61.3	0	0

All-purpose	Run	Rcv	KR	PR	IR	Total
Bryant, Tre	41	8	29	0	0	78
Nelson, Jordan	0	0	52	0	0	52
Westerkamp, J.	0	50	0	0	0	50
Newby, Terrell	39	2	0	0	0	41

### Iowa

Rushing	No.	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
Daniels, LeShun	29	160	2	158	2	56	5.4
Wadley, Akrum	11	105	0	105	1	75	9.5
Akinribade, T.	1	2	0	2	0	2	2.0
Beathard, C.J.	5	14	13	1	0	13	0.2
TEAM	1	0	2	-2	0	0	-2.0
Totals	47	281	17	264	3	75	5.6

Passing	C-A-I	Yds	TD	Long	Sack
Beathard, C.J.	10-15-0	144	3	77	2
Totals	10-15-0	144	3	77	2

Receiving	No.	Yards	TD	Long
McCarron, Riley	5	108	1	77
Wadley, Akrum	2	19	0	10
Kittle, George	2	7	2	6
Fant, Noah	1	10	0	10
Totals	10	144	3	77

Punting	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	In20	TB
Coluzzi, Ron	5	206	41.2	55	3	0
Totals	5	206	41.2	55	3	0

Returns	Punt			Kickoff			Intercept		
	No	Yds	Lg	No	Yds	Lg	No	Yds	Lg
McCarron, Riley	4	38	29	0	0	0	0	0	0
King, Desmond	2	44	44	3	80	28	0	0	0
Totals	6	82	44	3	80	28	0	0	0

Field goals	Qtr	Time	Dist	Result
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Kickoffs	No.	Yards	Avg	TB	OB
Coluzzi, Ron	7	440	62.9	3	0

All-purpose	Run	Rcv	KR	PR	IR	Total
Daniels, LeShun	158	0	0	0	0	158
McCarron, Riley	0	108	0	38	0	146
King, Desmond	0	0	80	44	0	124
Wadley, Akrum	105	19	0	0	0	124





Above: Running back Tre Bryant gets tripped up by an Iowa player. Right: Tight end Cethan Carter runs over an Iowa player.

## Defensive Statistics

#	Nebraska	Solo	Ast	Total	Sacks-Yds	TFL-Yds	FF	FR-Yds	Int-Yds	BrUp	Blks	QBH
1A	Rose-Ivey, M.	5	5	10	0.5-5	1-5	-	-	-	-	-	1
88	Dzuris, Ross	4	6	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
52	Banderas, Josh	5	4	9	0.5-5	2-7	-	-	-	-	-	-
55	Maurice, Kevin	5	2	7	1.0-3	1-3	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	Gerry, Nathan	4	2	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
96	Davis, Carlos	4	2	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Young II, D.	3	3	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	Reed, Antonio	3	0	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
26	Williams, K.	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24	Williams, Aaron	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
44	Stoltenberg, M.	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	Kalu, Joshua	0	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
91	Akinmoladun, F.	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
33	Bailey, C.	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
94	Davis, Khalil	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
41	McNitt, Luke	0	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
56	Simpson, Brad	0	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Domann, JoJo	0	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Newby, Marcus	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Totals		41	32	73	2.0-13	4-15	0	0-0	0-0	0	1	3

#	Iowa	Solo	Ast	Total	Sacks-Yds	TFL-Yds	FF	FR-Yds	Int-Yds	BrUp	Blks	QBH
41	Bower, Bo	4	5	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
43	Jewell, Josey	3	6	9	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1
37	Snyder, Brandon	5	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
96	Nelson, Matt	3	2	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
56	Ekakitie, Faith	2	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
12	Gair, Anthony	2	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
44	Niemann, Ben	2	1	3	-	1-1	-	-	-	1	-	-
98	Nelson, Anthony	2	1	3	1.0-10	1-10	-	-	-	-	-	1
99	Bazata, Nathan	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
67	Johnson, Jaleel	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
30	Gervase, Jake	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
34	Welch, Kristian	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	Jackson, Josh	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
26	Ward, Kevin	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40	Hesse, Parker	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	King, Desmond	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Rugamba, Manny	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals		36	28	64	1.0-10	2-11	0	0-0	0-0	8	0	3



**RUSHING OFFENSE:** Nebraska ran the ball for 90 yards on 31 carries. The Huskers averaged less than three yards a carry. This was never going to be the easiest matchup in the world, but Nebraska had to be able to run well enough to make things easier on the offense. That didn't happen on Saturday. Tre Bryant led all rushers with 41 yards, Terrell Newby had 39. The line didn't create space, Tommy Armstrong didn't have burst and was a non-factor. The best one can say is no one fumbled. — Michael Bruntz

F

**PASSING OFFENSE:** Nebraska didn't throw the ball well for the third time in three losses. Tommy Armstrong Jr. was erratic. He passed up open receivers in favor of deep shots, he missed players in coverage and he even missed the easy throws available to him. Armstrong was never in rhythm on Saturday. He hit a few tight passes at times, but going 14-for-36 is never going to win games against a quality team. Nebraska needed more. — Michael Bruntz

F

**RUSHING DEFENSE:** After playing solid run defense in recent weeks, the dam finally broke for the Huskers. Nebraska allowed 264 yards rushing and three touchdowns, while also giving up runs of 56 yards and 75 yards in the loss. The Iowa offensive line got consistent push against Nebraska's defensive line — that might have been the most surprising part of all. Iowa only threw 15 passes in the game because of the success it had on the ground. — Michael Bruntz

F

**PASSING DEFENSE:** Though Iowa only threw 15 passes in the game, it was an efficient afternoon for the Hawkeyes. C.J. Beathard was 10-for-15 for 144 yards and three touchdowns. Iowa hit a 77-yard touchdown pass to Riley McCarron in the first quarter that put Nebraska firmly on its heels. — Michael Bruntz

F

**KICKING/SPECIAL TEAMS:** Mike Riley called special teams a mixed bag a week ago, and after Friday's game, Riley said special teams was worse than a mixed bag. The Huskers lost the field position battle on Friday, and punted 10 times. Desmond King had a 44-yard punt return that helped set up an Iowa touchdown, and Caleb Lightbourn had just one of his 10 punts land inside the Iowa 20. Drew Brown did make his only attempt — a 35-yarder in the second quarter. — Michael Bruntz

F

# Game Notes

## RECORDS ARE BROKEN

Nebraska senior quarterback Tommy Armstrong Jr. made his 44th career start in Friday's games, the most ever by a Nebraska quarterback. Taylor Martinez previously held the Husker record.

Also, Armstrong accounted for 138 total yards in today's game, including 125 passing yards and 13 rushing yards. With his 138 yards, Armstrong increased his career total offensive yardage to 10,690 moving him up two spots to seventh on the Big Ten career total offense list. Armstrong passed Illinois Juice Williams (10,594) and Illinois Nathan Scheelhaase (10,634) in Friday's game.

Armstrong had one touchdown in today's game, increasing his career total to 91 touchdowns, the most in Nebraska history. Armstrong was previously tied with Eric Crouch, who had 90 total touchdowns in his Husker career.

Senior wide receiver Jordan Westerkamp caught four passes for 50 yards, to mark his 36th straight game with at least one reception. He is one shy of the Nebraska school record of 37 straight games by Johnny Rodgers.

He also increased his career receptions total to 167, moving him into second place on the Nebraska career receptions list. He passed Nate Swift's 166 career receptions in Friday's game. Westerkamp is 14 receptions from Kenny Bell's school record of 181 career receptions.

Lastly, Westerkamp increased his career receiving yardage total to 2,474. Westerkamp is two yards shy of Nate Swift (2,476) for third on the Nebraska career yardage list and five yards shy of tying Johnny Rodgers (2,479) for second on the list.

## SECOND DOWN CONSISTENCY HURTS THIRD DOWN OPTIONS

The Husker offense did itself no favor in keeping drives alive. The Huskers went three-and-out six times during the contest including four straight to end the game.

"We just couldn't really get into a rhythm," wide receiver Jordan Westerkamp said. "We had some real good drives but we couldn't finish and we were just struggling to get in a rhythm. Iowa's a great defense. They really showed out today."

On top of that, the Huskers were only 5-of-18 on third down conversions. Something the Huskers were able to do well in the first half of the season but has continued to haunt them down the stretch.

"I think the biggest thing, especially in the first half, was big plays and third down conversions," offensive coordinator Danny Langsdorf said. "I thought we were a little hit and miss with the run but we were okay. We were protecting the quarterback. We were just inconsistent."

## Quoting Nebraska head coach Mike Riley:

"It certainly didn't look like [we were prepared]. All we can do is go by what was absolutely tangible, and we got beat in all phases of the game. So, we're all responsible for that. Were we prepared? I think we were prepared with assignments. But that's about all it looked like, maybe."







Aaron Williams and Michael Rose-Ivey try to bring down Iowa's Riley McCarron.

Nebraska continued to either gain short yardage or lose yards on first and second downs to set up third-and-long. Nebraska rushed for 90 yards on 31 carries in the game.

"I just think we got ourselves in some bad situations on second down and second and long," Langsdorf said. "Then on third down we couldn't convert. We had some miss reads and had some missed throws. We were just a little off and when you can't hit on third down and sustain drives it makes it hard to stay on the field."

Like in the Ohio State game, the Huskers started to continuously throw deep once falling behind in the game.

Again and again quarterback Tommy Armstrong's throws were too out of reach for the receivers.

"We fell into that proverbial trap today," Nebraska Head Coach Mike Riley said.

"You're in that situation where you need points, you haven't really sustained much of anything, it might have been 26 to 10 and then you got a play and what you would like to do is get a mixture of things that would be good. When that second part of the mixture fails then you have to convert a third down, where you're not doing very good, you fall back into that trap."

### **SPECIAL TEAMS STILL 'A MIXED BAG'**

Over the past two weeks, Nebraska Head Coach Mike Riley has called his overall special teams play as a 'mixed bag' and Friday night the Huskers continued to live up to those remarks.

Iowa returned three kickoffs for 80 yards and six punts for 82 yards. That's a 26.7 and 13.7 average. Nebraska average 20.2 yards per kick return and 2.7 yard per punt return.

"I think it was no better than a mixed bag today," Riley said. "I think that as a matter of fact it was less than that. I don't think that there was anything that looked very good in the return teams and coverage teams. None of it looked real good today but it was also pretty much a picture of how our team looked. I'm real disappointed for everybody regarding that."

"Even our kickoff coverage has been pretty close to good and it was lousy today."

Freshman punt Caleb Lightbourn continued his season struggles. He punted 10 times for 364 yards including a 33-yard punt deep in their own territory. Lightbourn only averaged 28.2 total net yards per punt.

Junior kicker Drew Brown continued to have a good year. He made a 35-yard field goal in the first quarter and hit his only extra point attempt.



Iowa 40, Nebraska 10







JIMMY RASH/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED



MICHAEL SPOMER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED



JIMMY RASH/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED



MICHAEL SPOMER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

Clockwise from left: Nebraska players seemed loose and ready to go before the game. Nick Gates blocks as Ryker Fyfe makes a throw late in the game. JoJo Domann tries to tackle Iowa Desmond King on a punt return. Josh Banderas, Michael Rose-Ivey, Carlos Davis and Kevin Maurice converge on the tackle. Brandon Reilly dives to make a third-down catch. Chris Weber and Luke McNitt were among the NU tacklers on this play. John Parrella watches NU defensive linemen go through drills.



# 2MinuteDrill



**TRE BRYANT  
EMERGES AS NO. 2  
RUNNING BACK**

AARON BECKMAN/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED



**Compiled by Kevin Houck**

The Nebraska offensive coaching staff has been saying since the midway point of fall camp that they like what they see from running back Tre Bryant and he would make an impact in the games.

"All the guys know," Nebraska running backs coach Reggie Davis said. "They all know. They all have seen what he can do. Competition is a good thing, brings out the best in all of them."

Since then, Bryant has been the Huskers' kick returner and played a limited role at running back. Part of the reasons are senior running back Terrell Newby is having the best season of his Husker career and sophomore running back Devine Ozigbo was slotted behind Newby and looked to be his replacement next season.

But fate has seemed to change. After carrying the ball 66 times for 283 yards and four touchdowns Nebraska's first five games, Ozigbo suffered an ankle sprain in Nebraska's win over Illinois and hasn't been a factor since.

Since the Illinois game, Ozigbo has carried the ball 14 times for 28 yards and a touchdown. Even more, he hasn't played a single snap in the Huskers past two games. He also hasn't been fully healthy in most of those games.

But Nebraska head coach Mike Riley hinted his health isn't the only reason of his playing time diminishing.

"Devine is I think the healthiest he's been in a long time," Riley said. "Yes, he was available (last week). I thought late last week that Devine looked as comfortable and healthy as I've seen him in a long time. So he's definitely closer. Whether or not he's fully healthy, I'm not sure. But he continues to look better."

The emergence of Bryant the past two weeks is a big reason why he's moved past him on the depth chart.

"There's no doubt about it that Tre took advantage of kind of an open opportunity to play behind Newby," Riley said. "And at this moment he certainly is ahead as far as getting him ready to play in the games. We certainly want to give Devine an opportunity to be in the games and rotate in there."

"We've also tried to keep (Mikale) Wilbon going and active. Those four guys are all good players, but I would say right now, Newby and Bryant would be the first to play."

The true freshman carried the ball 13 times for 56 yards, including a 22-yard run against Maryland and a 35-yard touchdown catch against Minnesota.

"It's just improving every week, and they just called my number, and I just went out there and tried to perform to the best of my abilities," Bryant said.

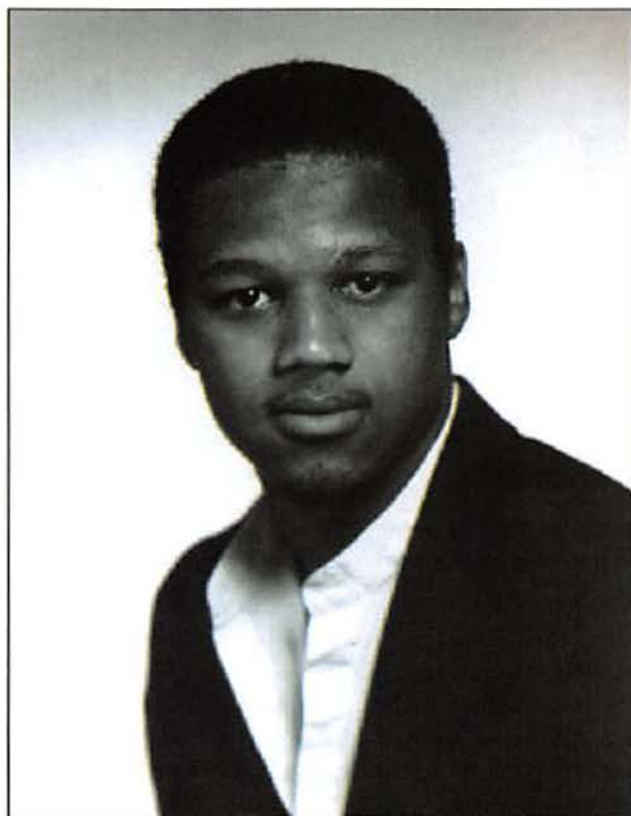
Riley said he's watched Bryant grow in every aspect of his game and is impressed that he can do it all.

"As you're watching practice and you gain confidence in his overall game, you can put him in no matter what (the situation) is," Nebraska coach Mike Riley said Monday. "I personally like backs like that; that you don't have to sub for. They can go in and then you can throw him the ball, he can block or you can give him the ball."

While his overall season rushing statistics rank fourth on the team with 32 carries for 132 yards, running backs

**HI'S TOP 5**

# HUSKER PLAYERS TAKEN IN THE 1982 NFL DRAFT



**Jimmy Williams was a first-round pick of the Lions in 1982.**

**1 Jimmy Williams, LB**  
1st Round, Detroit Lions

**2 Rodney Smith, DB**  
3rd Round, New Orleans Saints

**3 Henry Waechter, DT**  
7th Round, Chicago Bears

**4 Phil Bates, RB**  
7th Round, Detroit Lions

**5 Tom Carlstrom, OG**  
12th Round, New York Jets





Quarterbacks Tommy Armstrong Jr., Zack Darlington and Ryker Fyfe huddle up before the Iowa game. Armstrong started and played the majority of the snaps before Fyfe played in the last series of the game. Darlington was a holder on kicks.

coach Reggie Davis said he noticed in fall camp that Bryant had the potential to play as a true freshman. He said the running back has shown a lot of patience and that's allowed him to understand the little things on each play, even if he's not getting reps.

"He's always been pretty good assignment wise, but he had some guys ahead of him that were playing well so it's hard to find a way to get him in there," Davis said. "Then some opportunities came up for him to get in and he took advantage of it."

### ARMSTRONG WORKS WAY BACK FROM INJURY

Nebraska Head Coach Mike Riley wasn't quite sure on Monday who would start at quarterback for the Huskers. Tommy Armstrong Jr., who missed the game against Maryland, was still dealing with a hamstring injury. Ryker Fyfe injured his non-throwing wrist in Armstrong's place and had surgery on the wrist over the weekend.

So that left emergency quarterback Zack Darlington as the only playable quarterback healthy on the depth chart heading into Monday night's practice.

But as the week progressed Armstrong and Fyfe returned to practice.

Riley said Wednesday that Armstrong and Fyfe would be available to play on Friday against Iowa with Armstrong as the starter under center.

Fyfe wore a soft cast on his wrist throughout the week of practice and would continue to wear it for the game. Armstrong wore an artificial hamstring brace during practice.

Armstrong said on Tuesday that he was ready to play and he was expecting to be the starting quarterback on Nebraska's first series.

"I'm confident, I'm rested up, I'm good to go," Armstrong said. "I've just been practicing as much as I can. I feel like if we had a game today, I'd play. So I'm ready. It's been a long wait to get back on the field and practice with my boys, so it's a good sign that I'm out here in the beginning of the week to get in some work with them."

The senior has spent six to seven hours per day rehabbing in the training room, sometimes eating his meals there, but Armstrong said the motivation of finishing his final season on a high note has helped push him through.

"That was the main thing, just trying

to get healthy," Armstrong said. "You've got to understand that there's more than one game. We've got this game, and potentially, if the cards fall in place, we may be able to be in the Big Ten Championship. We just wanted to make sure that for myself, I'm healthy enough to get out here and be with my team."

Freshman quarterback Patrick O'Brien did not travel with the team to Iowa City.

"I feel good about the fact that I think all three of 'em are ready to go," Riley said.

### BANDERAS REFLECTS, WISHES HE'D REDSHIRTED

Life has treated linebacker Josh Banderas differently over the past four years, both on and off the football field.

When the senior looks back at the beginning of his freshman season, he sees a hungry true freshman who wanted the chance to play right away, but in reality he wasn't nearly ready for the challenge.

Banderas said he struggled through the first couple years of his Husker career, and it even got the point where he began to question his own love for the game of football.



"I just look back, and I just didn't like playing football," Banderas said. "I wasn't playing confident. I was playing scared and I didn't know what I was doing, and I was worried about too many other things going on than just what I needed to be worried about."

If he could do it all over again, Banderas said he would have rather red-shirted his first season in order to give him a year to settle in both mentally and physically.

But he was thrown into the fire right away as a standout from Lincoln Southwest. The massive adjustment from high school to college ball quickly became almost overwhelming.

And then you mix in the numerous injuries he suffered in each of his first three seasons as a Husker, it's understandable that frustration nearly got the best of Banderas.

"The first two, two and half years, they weren't ideal, weren't really what I wanted," Banderas said. "It was a tough ride. It really kind of tested myself and who I really was. But I think I kind of proved to myself that just being myself, eventually things are going to end up going my way if I keep giving that effort and don't just change anything because of someone else."

"They weren't wasted years by any means, they helped me grow so much more. What I've been seeing from that is I can help the younger guys who maybe aren't in the position they want. I can tell them my story and what I've been through, and just tell them that it gets better."

Banderas did make it clear that the old Nebraska coaching staff was not to blame for his early struggles, but he did say he felt rejuvenated when Riley and staff took over two years ago.

Also, the Iowa game will mark the first time in his career that Banderas will have played in every single regular-season game.

"No doubt, this is most confidence I've felt," Banderas said. "At least I can say that."

He currently leads the team with 80 tackles, and he's racked up eight or more stops in each of the past six games. Possibly playing the best football of his career.

"I have known it all along," wide re-



AARON BECKMAN/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

**Josh Banderas makes a tackle for the Huskers against Iowa.**

ceiver Brandon Reilly said. "He struggled for a little while there, and I am like 'Guys, just wait. Bando is an animal.' I think these last few weeks it has really shown. He has been through a lot. I know growing up in football, he got hurt every year for about 13 years straight I think. So hopefully he keeps staying healthy this year. It is fun to watch him, and I am sure I will be watching him more in the future, too."

## HUSKERS, HAWKEYES BECOMING RIVALS

After Nebraska's 28-7 victory over Maryland, Husker players quickly focused their attention to how much the Iowa game means to them. Nebraska will travel across the Missouri River to face Iowa on Black Friday.

Not only have fans bought into the rivalry since the Huskers arrival to the Big 10, but now players are starting to see the importance of each team's last regular season game.

*Continued on Pg. 26*



MICHAEL SPOMER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

**Despite a rivalry that is developing with Iowa, this Hawkeye fan made a sign for Sam Foltz.**





Stanley Morgan Jr. dives into the endzone for Nebraska's only touchdown in its 40-10 loss against Iowa. Morgan caught the 13-yard touch





JIMMYRASH/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

own on a fourth-down pass from Tommy Armstrong Jr.





Kinnick Stadium has become a regular away game for Nebraska since the Huskers joined the Big Ten and renewed a border battle with the Hawkeyes each year. With Friday's 40-10 loss, NU is now 1-3 in its last four meetings with Iowa.

*Continued from Pg. 23*

"It means everything," senior line-backer Josh Banderas said after Saturday's win over Maryland. "Iowa hasn't been an easy team. I've only personally beat them once. It would be nice to end on a tie."

"To finish off a season like this after all we've been through, to beat them at their home would just mean an unreal amount to this team. Send the senior out right, the work that my teammates have put in that's the deserving way to go out."

The Big Ten even had their eyes set on the future rivalry themselves. The conference created a "Hy-Vee Heroes Game" trophy for the annual Black Friday matchup.

Senior wide receiver Jordan Westerkamp said everything around the game has it all set up to become Nebraska's biggest rival.

"I would say so," Westerkamp said. "It's always a tough game, it's always the last game of the year. It's set up pretty well to be a good rivalry. They got us last

year at home, and we got them the year before at home. So it's been good ball games and we are really looking forward to this match up this weekend."

The road team has claimed the past four games in the series. The Huskers are 29-14-2 all time against the Hawkeyes but are 3-2 in the five games they've played since the Huskers merged from the Big 12 to Big 10.

"It seems like a really great natural rivalry that will just do nothing but grow and become bigger and bigger," Riley said. "I mean, just the proximity, kind of the like-mindedness, I just think it's a perfect fit that way... Our players, I don't know about what they think about the rivalry aspect, but I know that they see them as they'll be a constant competitor for this Western Division deal."

"So every game will be big, and you know, I think the rivalry part of it will be great for all of us surrounding, the fans, and I think it will become more and more real."

But as far as the teams playing on Black Friday every year, the players have

had mixed emotions about on a short week.

"I personally like it," Westerkamp said. "It's the only show on TV. It's a big game for us. It's tough because the week is condensed with everything you are supposed to do. You adjust to the schedule and you get through it. We are really looking forward to playing this Friday."

While other players starve themselves knowing they have a game the day after Thanksgiving.

"No," senior defensive tackle Kevin Maurice said. "I think it would be cool to have a Saturday to sit around and watch what else happens and Sunday taking to push things forwards. It's tough for us, but it's something that we have to deal with. It's cool I guess for you guys."

"It's tough for the fat boys. (Thanksgiving) is our favorite holiday. We have meals throughout the week, and we have different meals that pertain to it. Some guys just hold off Thanksgiving until after. Starve yourself a little bit on Thursday, lose all that weight on Friday and scarf it up on the weekend."



# Hometown Huskers

## Kearney kicker Lindsay gets chance on Senior Day

Story by Kevin Houck • Photo by Mitch Otto

**KICKER SPENCER** Lindsay has had quite an interesting year for the Huskers but the script couldn't have been more touching.

In the offseason, the senior pondered if he should graduate transfer to Hawaii for his last season with being behind Drew Brown on the depth chart. But when decision time came, it was his roommate and best friend Sam Foltz who persuaded Lindsay to stay. Then tragically before the season, Foltz passed away in a car accident in Wisconsin.

Lindsay and the Huskers dedicated their 2016 season to Foltz and honored him on Senior Day against Maryland. But that's when life started to get weirder for Lindsay.

Before the game a balloon landed on the 27-yard line (Foltz's number) and to make things more interesting, on the first play of the game, Brown went out with a concussion trying to make a sideline tackle.

Lindsay replaced Brown on field goal and kickoff duties for the rest of the game.

"It was special and kind of weird how life can work out sometimes," Lindsay said. "Obviously, you never want to see Drew go down with how much he's helped our team and how talented of a kicker he is. In my mind, he's the best kicker in the Big Ten, but I was happy to come in and do the job, especially on a day when Ryker (Fyfe) got his chance to come out."

Fyfe, who made his first career home start in replace for Tommy Armstrong Jr., grew up playing against Lindsay in high school. Fyfe and Foltz attended Grand Island High School and Lindsay went to Kearney High School. A yearly rivalry that quickly turned into a bond between the three.

"I've got to make a mention for Spencer Lindsay," Nebraska head coach Mike Riley said after the win over Maryland. "I'm proud of him. He stepped in there and did a nice job. It was kind of fitting for him and Ryker. They played against each other in high school and there they were together, their last games at Memorial Stadium."

In the game, Lindsay hit all four of his PAT's but missed his lone field goal attempt. A missed blocking assignment on the outside allowed the defender to break free to block the kick. Lindsay said his experience the two previous years helped calm his nerves.



"I was pretty calm," Lindsay said. "I felt pretty good about it. I started a few games as a sophomore, played a little bit as a junior and played some this year too, so I had pretty good feelings about it. You just got to go in there with confidence and I feel like I was able to do that. I knew Jordan Ober was going to give me a great snap and Zack (Darlington) would give me a great hold."

"I wish the kickoffs would have been a little bit better. I couldn't kick through the ball on the kickoffs but the PAT's were good and the blocked field goal is not what we wanted."

And it was Riley to congratulate him first after the game. Lindsay said he's glad he didn't transfer and had the 63-year-old coach around when tragedy struck.

"He just told me good job," Lindsay said. "He was proud of me and we talked a little bit on Sunday about what this week would look like. But yeah, he was pretty happy with it. Him and I have kind of formed a special relationship since we started being together. He's helped me through a lot of what this year has been like. I certainly want to thank him for that. He's been a big factor in getting a lot of the guys through this kind of emotional year."





# 2016 HUSKER FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Location	Results
Sat, Sep 03	Fresno State	Memorial Stadium	-
Sat, Sep 10	Wyoming	Memorial Stadium	-
Sat, Sep 17	Oregon	Memorial Stadium	-
Sat, Sep 24	Northwestern *	at Evanston, Ill.	-
Sat, Oct 01	Illinois *	Memorial Stadium	-
Sat, Oct 15	Indiana *	at Bloomington, Ind.	-
Sat, Oct 22	Purdue *	Memorial Stadium	-
Sat, Oct 29	Wisconsin *	at Madison, Wis.	-
Sat, Nov 05	Ohio State *	at Columbus, Ohio	-
Sat, Nov 12	Minnesota *	Memorial Stadium	-
Sat, Nov 19	Maryland *	Memorial Stadium	-
Fri, Nov 25	Iowa *	at Iowa City, Iowa	-

\*Conference Games



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# How Nebraska's Opponents Fared in Week 13

**Sept. 3**

**Fresno State (1-11)**

**San Jose State 16, Fresno State 14**

Spartans kicker Bryce Crawford kicked three second half field goals, including the game winning 23-yarder midway through the fourth quarter. The Bulldogs offense became stale and didn't cross their own 32-yard line in the second half after scoring 14 unanswered points in the second quarter.

**Sept. 10**

**Wyoming (8-4)**

**New Mexico 56, Wyoming 35**

New Mexico jumped out to a 35-7 halftime lead to cruise to victory in the second half. The Lobos used the rushing attack to overwhelm the Cowboys. They rushed for 568 yards, which is the most the Cowboys have given up ever. Three Lobos rushed for over a 100 yards and at least one touchdown on the day.

**Sept. 17**

**Oregon (4-8)**

**Oregon State 34, Oregon 24**

The Beavers snap their eight-game Civil War game losing streak by scoring 13 unanswered points in the fourth quarter in the victory. Beaver running back Ryan Nail rushed for 155 yards and four touchdowns, while Oregon quarterback Justin Herbert threw for 180 yards and a touchdown.

**Sept. 24**

**Northwestern (6-6, 5-4)**

**Northwestern 42, Illinois 21**

The Wildcats jumped out to a 21-0 lead midway through the second quarter to cruise to the victory. Northwestern's two running backs controlled the tempo throughout the game. Justin Jackson carried the ball 21 times for 173 yards and three touchdowns while John Moten IV had 128 yards and two touchdowns on 14 carries.

**Oct. 1**

**Illinois (3-9, 2-7)**

**Northwestern 42, Illinois 21**

The Wildcats jumped out to a 21-0 lead midway through the second quarter to cruise to the victory. Northwestern's two running backs controlled the tempo throughout the game. Justin Jackson carried the ball 21 times for 173 yards and three touchdowns while John Moten IV had 128 yards and two touchdowns on 14 carries.

**Oct. 15**

**Indiana (6-6, 4-5)**

**Indiana 26, Purdue 24**

Indiana running back Devine Redding scored from one-yard out with 4:59 left and they forced two Purdue turnovers in the last

four minutes to propel the Hoosiers late. Redding finished with 99 yards rushing and a touchdown. Purdue quarterback David Blough threw for 255 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions.

**Oct. 22**

**Purdue (3-9, 1-8)**

**Indiana 26, Purdue 24**

Indiana running back Devine Redding scored from one-yard out with 4:59 left and they forced two Purdue turnovers in the last four minutes to propel the Hoosiers late. Redding finished with 99 yards rushing and a touchdown. Purdue quarterback David Blough threw for 255 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions.

**Oct. 29**

**Wisconsin (10-2, 7-2)**

**Wisconsin 31, Minnesota 17**

Minnesota entered the fourth quarter with a seven point lead but the Badgers put it together late and scored 21 unanswered points in the fourth quarter to gather momentum heading into the Big Ten Championship game. Wisconsin running back Corey Clement rushed for 100 yards and two touchdowns.

**Nov. 5**

**Ohio State (11-1, 8-1)**

**Ohio State 30, Michigan 27 (2 OT)**

After missing two field goals earlier, Ohio State kicker Tyler Durbin hit a 23-yard field goal to send the game to overtime. In the second overtime, Curtis Samuel rushed the ball around the left side for a 15-yard game-winning touchdown for the Buckeyes. Ohio State quarterback JT Barrett combined for 249 yards of total offense and a touchdown.

**Nov. 12**

**Minnesota (8-4, 5-4)**

**Wisconsin 31, Minnesota 17**

Minnesota entered the fourth quarter with a seven point lead but the Badgers put it together late and scored 21 unanswered points in the fourth quarter to gather momentum heading into the Big Ten Championship game. Wisconsin running back Corey Clement rushed for 100 yards and two touchdowns.

**Nov. 19**

**Maryland (6-6, 3-6)**

**Maryland 31, Rutgers 13**

Maryland jumped out to a 21-7 lead at halftime to clinch bowl eligibility in the win. Maryland running back Ty Johnson rushed for 168 yards. Three different Terrapins rushed for touchdowns. Rutgers lost their last nine regular season games to finish winless in the Big Ten conference.



# This Week In Husker History

Nov. 28, 1997

Story by Kevin Houck • Huskers Illustrated Archives

This week in Husker history we go back to Nov. 28, 1997 – the year of Nebraska's last national championship – when No. 2 Nebraska traveled to Boulder to take on the Colorado Buffaloes.

Colorado almost spun out of Nebraska's grasp in a crazy finish that had the Cornhuskers gasping and confused. The Buffs, who finished 5-6 overall, scored two touchdowns with ease in a span of 39 seconds and stopped Nebraska's offense to get one final punch at the undefeated Huskers.

Nebraska freshman cornerback Erwin Swiney spun Colorado wide receiver Phil Savoy out of bounds, just three yards short of a first down with 21 seconds left for Nebraska to escape with a 27-24 victory at Folsom Field.

The Huskers were able to strike first. Kicker Kris Brown connected on a 25-yard field goal with 4:16 left in the first quarter to put the Husker up, 3-0.

Quarterback Scott Frost and the offense went right back to work on their next possession. Frost capped off the drive with an 11-yard rushing touchdown with 11:42 left in the first half to go up, 10-0.

The Buffaloes used some trickery in the final minute of the first half to finally get on the board. A 43-yard run on a fake punt by Dwayne Cherrington kept a Colorado drive alive long enough to set up a 30-yard field goal to cut NU's lead to 10-3 at halftime.

Nebraska running back Ahman Green came out running to open the second half. He exploded for a 64-yard sprint to open the second half followed up by a 16-yard rushing touchdown less than a minute into the second half.

Colorado responded with a drive that took less than a minute also. Quarterback Jon Hessler ended the drive with a 35-yard touchdown pass to Cherrington with 13:53 left in the third quarter to cut the Nebraska lead to 17-10.

Green scored again for the Huskers, this time on an 11-yard run with 10:37 left in the third quarter, to cap a startling drive that included a 31-yard pass from Frost to Kenny Cheatham and a 22-yarder to Matt Davison.

A Brown field goal ended a 13-play drive as the third quarter ended to extend the Huskers lead to 27-10 and what seemed to lock up Nebraska's victory.

Colorado appeared out of the game and headed for its first los-

ing season in 11 years when Nebraska took a 27-10 lead into the fourth quarter.

The only problem was that Colorado gave Nebraska one last haymaker before admitting defeat.

Nebraska's near collapse started when Colorado safety Ryan Sutter stripped the ball from Green and Colorado's Ryan Black recovered at the Buffs' 23-yard line with 4:59 left in the game.

Hessler then guided Colorado on a 77-yard scoring drive in just less than two minutes, ending in a 32-yard passing touchdown from Hessler to wide receiver Marcus Stiggers, to cut the score to 27-17 with 3:16 left.

The Buffs, on the ensuing kick-off, recovered an onside kick that bounced off the hands of Husker T.J. DeBates, and then Colorado needed just four plays to cover 55 yards. Hessler found wide receiver Robert Toler in the back of the endzone for a 18-yard touchdown.

Colorado regained possession with 52 seconds left following a Nebraska punt, and Hessler connected for 16 yards to Savoy. On third-and-10 later in the drive, Savoy caught a 14-yard pass but was flagged for offensive pass interference.

On third-and-25, Hessler deep pass was deflected by cornerback Ralph Brown to force fourth down with 21 seconds left. Savoy sprinted 15 yards on fourth down and turned to the sideline to catch Hessler's last pass but Swiney grabbed Savoy's arm and spun

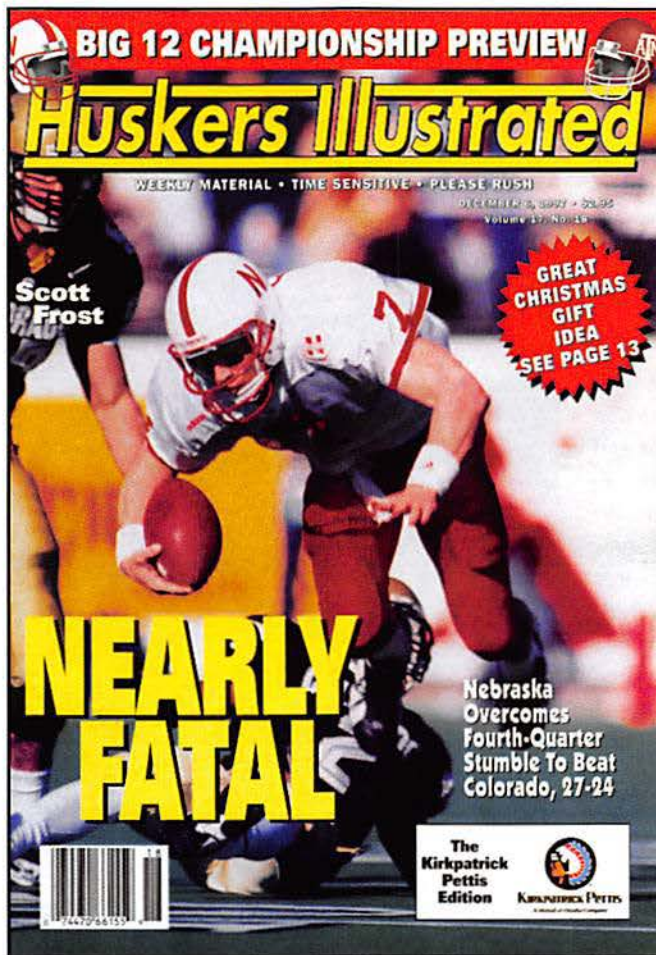
him out of bounds to save the game for the Huskers.

The same Nebraska defense that came up with an interception by Eric Warfield at the Nebraska 32-yard line in the second quarter and Swiney's interception at the Nebraska 27-yard line in the third quarter was stunned in the final minutes.

Nebraska, which finished with 442 yards - 43 in the fourth quarter - managed just two first downs in the final quarter and gained just 8 yards compared to Colorado's 165 in the final five minutes of the game.

Colorado, with 455 yards of offense, were the only team to outgain the Huskers that season.

Green finished with 202 yards and two touchdowns on 29 carries and Frost had 168 yards of total offense in the win for the Huskers.





# Omaha I-Backs

## Metro has produced some of the best in NU history

Story By **Shane G. Gilster**

Action Photo by **Michael Bruntz**

For a period of 13 years, from 1985 thru 1997, Nebraska had at least one I-back from the Omaha metro on the field making an impact for the Huskers.

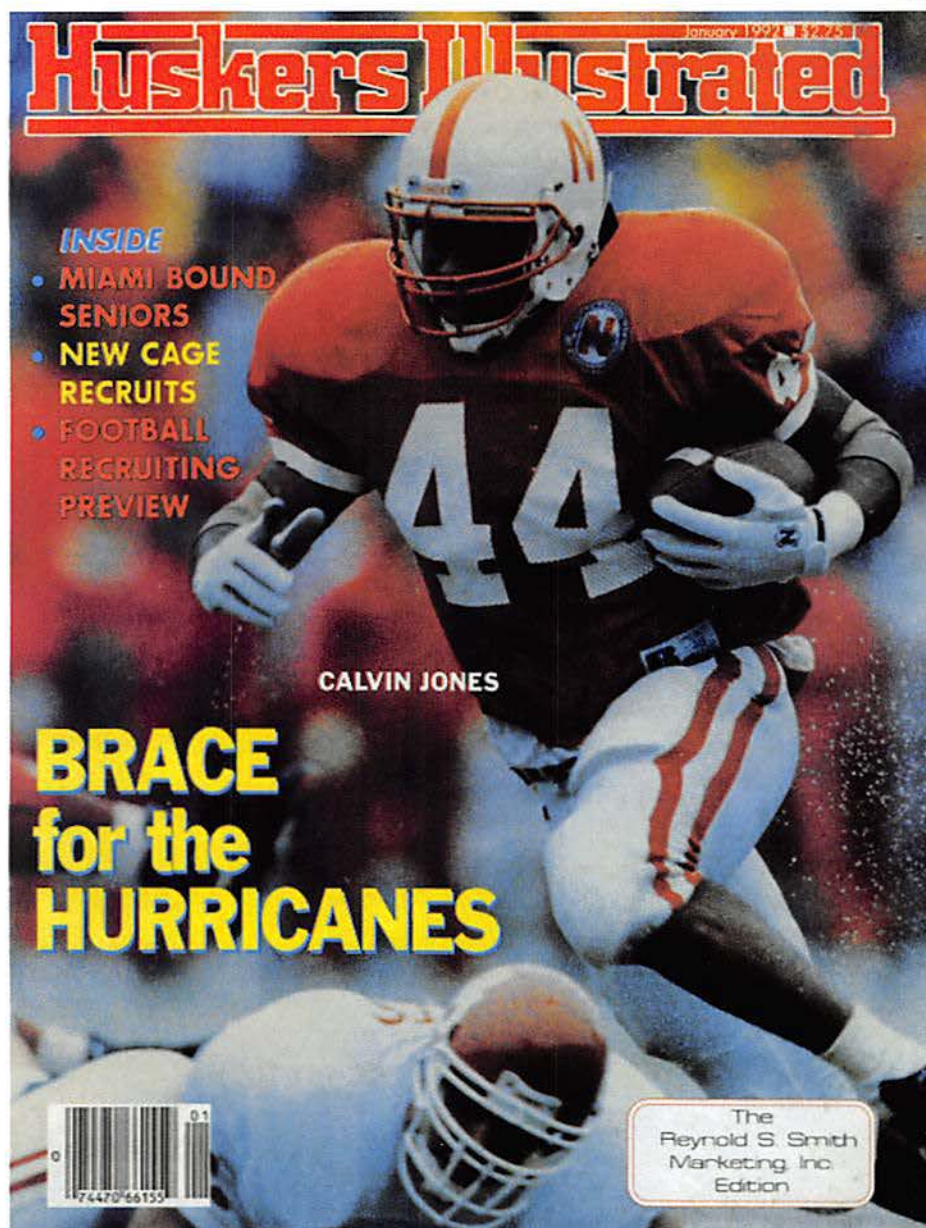
Omaha metro high schools produced the kind of talent that rivaled any high school in California or Texas, especially when it came to highly recruited prep running backs.

But there was one high school that stood above the rest in terms of producing consistent prep All-American backs. Nicknamed "I-back High," Omaha Central became legendary due to running backs who went on to play for the home-state Cornhuskers, including these stars.

**David Horne** – Horne came out of high school ranked as one of the top backs in the country in 2002, went to Nebraska and played in 21 games before transferring after his sophomore season. As a true freshman, Horne burned his redshirt five games into the season and rushed for 651 yards and seven touchdowns, including a 128-yard/four-touchdown performance against Texas A&M. He was the third-leading rusher for the Huskers that season.

**Leodis Flowers** – Flowers was one of the most highly recruited backs in the country in 1986, and was the Gatorade regional player-of-the-year. He had seven 100-yard performances between 1988 and 1990 including five in a row, and led the Huskers in rushing in 1990 with 940 yards, averaging 6.3 yards per carry.

**Calvin Jones** – Jones was a consensus prep All-American back, and was considered by some as the best running back the state ever produced. Jones set Class A rushing records for a game (367 yards), season (2,196) and career (3,965). He averaged 8.4 yards per carry and scored 22 touchdowns as a senior in 1989. As a redshirt freshman, Jones set the NU freshman rushing record with 900 yards, averaging a record 8.33 yards per carry. He also led the conference in scoring with 8.4 points per game, and set the NU single-game rushing record with 294 yards against Kansas,



**Calvin Jones was considered the best running back the state ever produced.**

scoring six rushing touchdowns, a Husker and Big Eight record. As a sophomore, Jones and fellow I-back Derek Brown split time (each rushing for over 1,000 yards) and as a junior he again rushed for more than 1,000 yards.

**Ahman Green** – Green was as heralded as Jones as a prep senior in 1994. A first-team USA Today and Parade All-American running back, Green was one of the top backs in the entire country. The 6-0, 200-pounder ran the 40-yard dash in 4.4,

and rushed for nearly 1,600 yards and 14 touchdowns while averaging 9.7 yards per carry. He ran for more than 1,000 yards as a sophomore at Omaha North before transferring to Central for his final two years. If you ask which of the Omaha backs, who played at Nebraska, had the best collegiate and pro careers, Green is your guy. He finished second all-time on NU's career rushing list with 3,880 yards, averaging 6.76 yards per carry and scoring 42 touchdowns. He would have had a legitimate chance of



# Huskers Illustrated

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**Ahman Green had the best collegiate and NFL career of any Omaha back.**

surpassing Mike Rozier's all-time record of 4,780 yards, if he had returned for his senior season. Green chose to move on to the NFL and became a five-time NFL Pro Bowl selection for the Green Bay Packers.

**Keith Jones** – That is quite an all-star list from just one high school. But the “I-back High” tradition all started with Keith “End Zone” Jones.

“I can’t recall anyone before me that went on to Nebraska and starred at I-back,” said Jones, who played for the Huskers from 1984-87. “I would say that I started it, as far as there being a straight line for running backs from the Omaha area to play at Lincoln. After me came some other guys from Central and Ken Clark from Omaha Bryan. Ken had a very good collegiate career at Nebraska.”

But the I-back tradition at Omaha Central had been established. Its head football coach, William Reed, made it possible for guys coming from Central to go to Nebraska.

“He got guys to play there. Guys like me, Leodis Flowers, Calvin Jones and Ahman Green. It started with my signing with Nebraska back in 1983,” Jones explained. “You talk about history being made for high schools in Omaha, being able to produce that legacy of running backs at Nebraska and have success not only collegiately, but being able to play professionally.”

Jones broke onto the high school scene by breaking all of the Central rushing records held by NFL Hall of Famer Gale Sayers.

Jones wasn’t the biggest running back,

at 5-8 and 170 pounds, but he was fast... really fast.

“I wasn’t a very big guy, but speed was my asset. My fastest 40-yard dash time was a 4.31 electronic, 4.13 hand-held,” Jones said.

And after running for more than 1,700 yards (9.1 avg) and 18 TDs as a senior in 1983, including career highs of 235 yards against state champion Creighton Prep and 216 yards against the state runner-up Omaha Gross, Jones gained recruiting attention from colleges nationwide. Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Washington, LSU and Nebraska made Jones’s wish list.

“It came down to Washington and Nebraska. For me, it was more about family and friends to be able to come and watch me play. I knew I would have more support and encouragement if I stayed at home,” Jones said.

So Jones brought his catchy nickname and trademark bandana and headband to the Cornhusker backfield.

“End Zone” was a name given to him by his teammates in high school, because he scored a lot of touchdowns (obviously). His touchdown-making prowess carried over to the Huskers, as he finished his career with 2,488 yards on 398 attempts (6.25 avg.) ranking him 17th on NU’s all-time rushing list, and adding 32 touchdowns.

A two-year starter, Jones led the league in rushing as a junior with 830 yards and 14 touchdowns, earning first-team All-Big 8 honors. As a senior he ran for 1,232 yards and 13 TDs, ranking eighth in the country in rushing and second in the Big 8.

Playing in front of his home state and family friends was very special for Jones. “It affected me tremendously coming from Omaha Central to play football at Nebraska. The support that I got from my family and neighbors, to everyone I was acquainted with, was unbelievable, because they all were Husker fans. The community as a whole was a big support to encourage me to stay home and play. What also helped was that my brother Lee was already a Husker, and I was only one year behind him.”

Jones said his competitive nature was fueled by his Omaha upbringing.

“It started in sandlot football, all year-round,” Jones said. “I played against guys that were older than me most of the time in my neighborhood. It allowed me to sharpen my skills, and a lot of other athletes that came after me would say the same thing.



We were outside playing and it was competitive. Now you have computers and video games which keep a lot of kids indoors. We didn't have all that back then. We were more active, and the more active you are the better shape you are going to be in and be able to compete."

Jones said that in Omaha, guys discussed which high school they wanted to attend. Some guys wanted to go to the same school to make things more competitive.

"I knew a number of guys at Omaha Central, and that made me want to go there and compete [with] some of the better athletes in the city. When I went on to Central, it didn't bother me to compete because I competed with and against the best all my life."

That is another reason why Jones wanted to go to Nebraska and play I-back for the Cornhuskers.

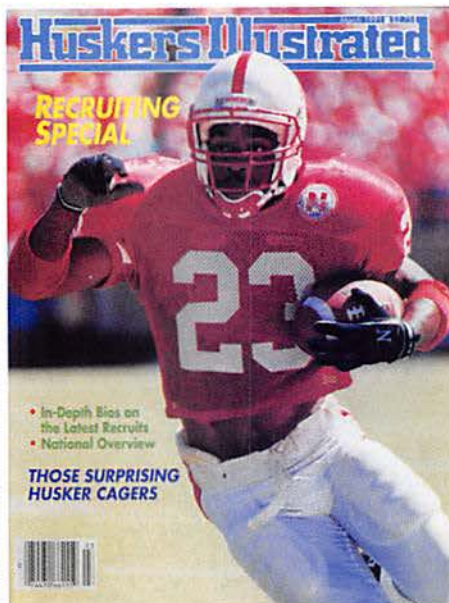
"Mike Rozier was leaving and he left a legacy and I wanted to go there and obtain what he did," Jones said. "When I got to Nebraska I had to go against Jeff Smith, Doug DuBose, Paul Miles and Tyreese Knox at the I-back position. You knew they were going to get some of the best guys from across the country and you were going to have to come out and bring it each day in practice and in the game."

Horne in 2002-2003 was the last I-back from Omaha to have an impact at NU. There are various possible explanations as to what happened to the I-back pipeline from Omaha to NU, but there's no specific reason that anyone can identify.

"I have been out of touch with Central and what they got going on competitively," Jones said. "I am not sure how far it has fallen off and why players are not having the success that they had in the past. But it amazes me how for so long, year after year, there were Division I athletes coming out of there. I think the talent is still there, but it is a matter of those individuals doing what they need to do in order to be competitive amongst each other, and that is what really breeds success athletically."

When asked who he thought was the best running back to ever come out of Omaha to play for Nebraska, Jones identified Green.

"I had the privilege of coaching Ahman his junior and senior year at Central," Jones said. "He was at North High School before, and spoke with our head coach and myself about transferring to Central. I told



**Leodis Flowers, above left, and Keith Jones, above right, were Omaha Central standouts.**

him I thought it would be a great opportunity to try and carry on that tradition at Central."

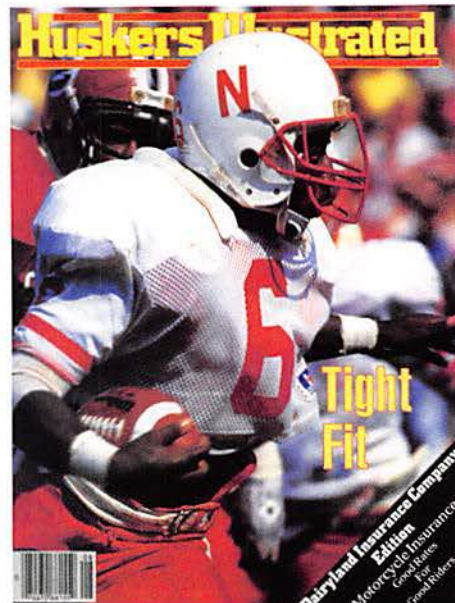
And at Nebraska.

"I had (Frank) Solich (Nebraska running back coach) calling me and wanting the skinny on Ahman. I told him that the kid is as fundamentally sound as any high school player that I've been around, and from the physical standpoint he worked extremely hard ... positioning himself to make an impact immediately at the next level."

Central might have an edge in the number of players to go on and play at NU, but players from other Omaha high schools also made an impact at the prep level and then at Nebraska, including the following:

**Damon Benning** – Benning was the Class A leading rusher in 1991 for Omaha Northwest High School. As a senior, he tied the state record with nine straight 100 yard games while rushing for 1,548 yards and 21 touchdowns. At Nebraska, Benning backed up Lawrence Phillips, Calvin Jones and Ahman Green, and split time with Clinton Childs. Benning's best performance came in the 1996 Orange Bowl against Virginia Tech, when he rushed for 95 yards and two touchdowns, and was named the Orange Bowl MVP.

**Clinton Childs** – Childs finished second to Benning for the Class A rushing title, but set the Metro Conference single-game rushing record with 370 yards, bettering a Calvin Jones' mark. He came up just shy of Jones' Class A career rushing record, finishing second at the time he graduated with 3,947 yards. Childs became



a very capable backup at Nebraska, and also handled kickoff return duties, averaging more than 21 yards per return in 1994 and 1995. Childs' career-best rushing day came against Arizona State in 1995, when he had 143 yards and two TDs.

**Ken Clark** – Before Childs and Benning was Ken Clark, who arrived at Nebraska one year after Keith Jones.

"There really wasn't much of a tradition of running backs coming from Omaha prior to the mid-'80s and early '90s," said Clark. "I think Keith was probably the first one, and then after that it got rolling."

"It is a very proud tradition to not be only part of the I-back tradition at Nebraska but coming from Omaha and being part of that. I-back was the featured position at the time, and to get an opportunity to do that, you can't put into words what it means to you."

Clark played at Omaha Bryan High School, which wasn't a football power like Central.

"I could have gone to another high school that had more of a high-profile football program, but you would have to find your own transportation. So my options were Bryan and Omaha South. I didn't know which school I wanted to go to, so during two-a-day practices, I practiced with South in the morning and Bryan in the afternoon. South ran the wishbone offense and Bryan ran the I-formation. The wishbone didn't highlight my strengths and Bryan ran an offense similar to Nebraska's, featuring the I-back mostly."

To this day, Clark has heard that he still is the only Omaha Bryan athlete ever to



get a full-ride scholarship from a Division I school.

"It was a huge challenge coming from Bryan. There wasn't much there in terms of a football program. I was just able to shine against some of the top teams at the time like Omaha Central. Basically, it's not where you play, but how you play. Even if your team is not that great, that is even more opportunity to shine, because you are going to get more touches and make more plays.

"I didn't get the notoriety that some of the (Omaha) Central players got, but I took advantage of my opportunities. It was a self-created rivalry by me against the Omaha Central players. I took it as a huge challenge to do well against them, and I always did by rushing for over 100 yards and a couple of touchdowns. Actually Coach Osborne and Coach Solich noticed me when we played Central. They didn't know anything about me until that game, and a week later I got a letter from Nebraska."

But with Nebraska having its all-world competition I-back, Clark was encouraged by friends and family to play elsewhere.

"A lot of folks in my community were telling me not to go to Nebraska because they thought I would never play there. [But] being an I-back in high school, that is what you want to see and be a part of. I couldn't have gone anywhere that would have highlighted my strengths as much as Nebraska did.

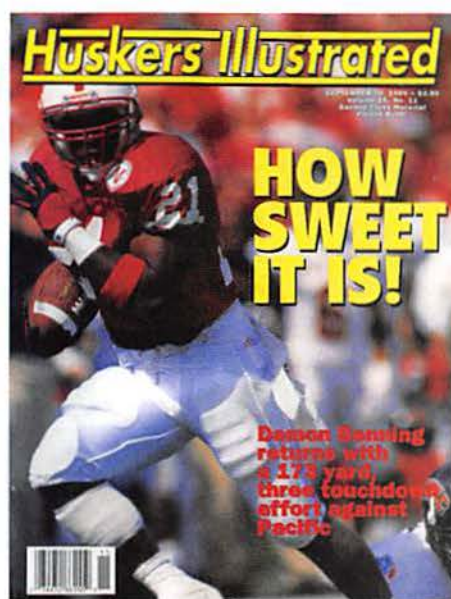
"Being from Omaha you wonder how you are going to measure up against the guys from out of state like California. I was like 13th on the depth chart when I first arrived at Nebraska. It was frightening and frustrating to be in that situation."

Clark bided his time in 1986 and '87 behind Keith Jones, the starting I-back.

In 1988, the 5-10, 200-pound Clark rushed for 1,497 yards, which at that time was the third-best single-season rushing total in team history. (Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier compiled the top two totals in 1982 and 1983.)

Clark ranked second in the Big Eight and fifth in the nation, averaging 6.5 yards per carry and nearly 125 yards per game. He was named first-team All-Big 8 alongside Heisman Trophy winner Barry Sanders by AP, but UPI and the Big Eight Coaches placed Clark on its second team.

"Ken didn't get the recognition he deserved. He probably had as quiet a 1,500 yards as you're going to see," NU running



**Ken Clark, above left, and Damon Benning, above right, made their mark at Nebraska.**



**Bellevue West's Jaylin Bradley (9) is coming off a record-breaking season in 2016.**

backs coach Frank Solich said after Clark's junior season.

A Heisman Trophy-type season was projected for Clark in 1989, but due to several factors (including injuries), Clark fell short of bettering his junior season. His totals were solid, as he rushed for close to 1,200 yards (6.0 avg) with 12 touchdowns, and he did make all three All-Big Eight first teams and was named a third-team All-American by Football News.

Clark holds the junior single-game rushing record (fourth best overall in NU history) with 256 yards against Oklahoma State in 1988. He is No. 8 on the Nebraska career rushing chart with 3,037 yards and is No. 7 on the single-season rushing list (1,497).

**Jaylin Bradley** – Will Omaha once again renew its tradition of making its star

running backs into Cornhuskers?

Bellevue West's Jaylin Bradley is in the mold of those great Omaha metro running backs and he has the stats to back that up.

This past season Bradley rushed for over 2,900 yards and broke the NSAA Class A record with 50 touchdowns, which included 24 in the playoffs. In the Class A championship game against No. 1 Omaha North, he ran for 249 yards on 36 carries and five touchdowns, helping the Thunderbirds win their first-ever state title in football.

There is no questioning Bradley's talent but if he goes on to star for the Huskers remains to be seen. Regardless what happens to Bradley's collegiate football career, it is nice to see the Omaha metro once again producing this type of high school running back.



# Big Red Wins Big Ten

## Huskers beat Michigan, capture first title since 2011

Story courtesy of NU Media Relations • Photos by Reggie Ryder

The No. 1 Nebraska volleyball team captured the Big Ten Conference title on Senior Night with a 3-1 (25-19, 25-17, 22-25, 25-21) win over No. 18 Michigan in front of a crowd of 8,210 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center on Saturday.

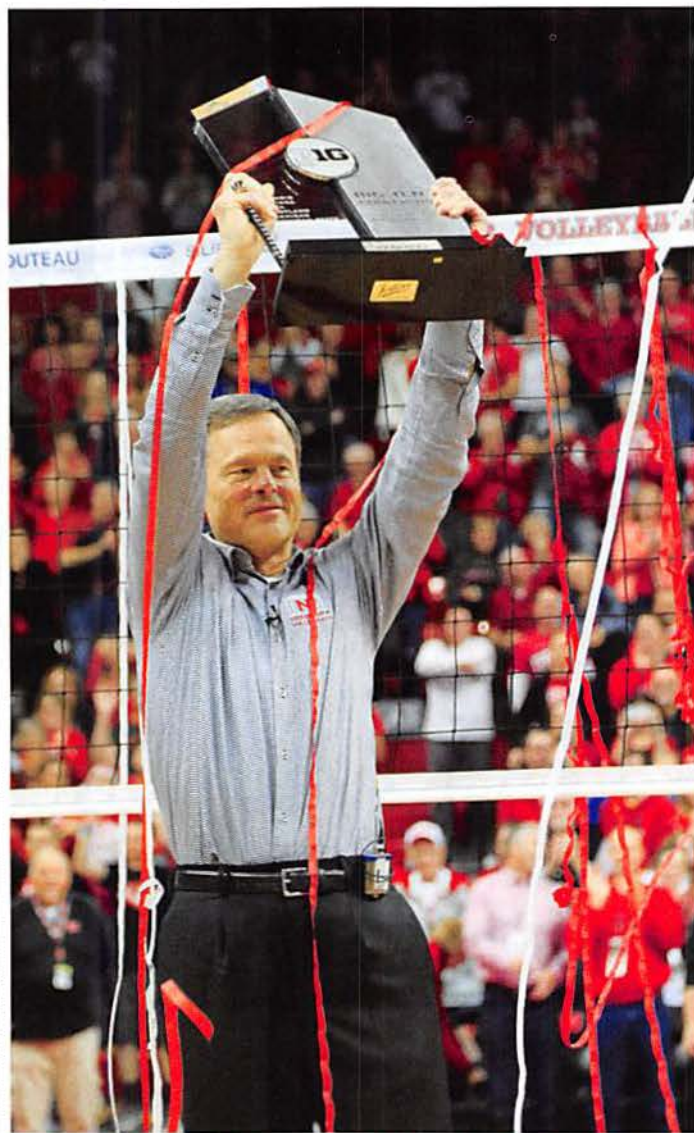
The Huskers captured their 33rd overall conference championship and second in the Big Ten – but first since 2011 – by finishing the rugged conference schedule with an 18-2 record, the best mark in Nebraska's six years in the conference. Nebraska's win over the Wolverines (22-10, 11-9 Big Ten) initially gave the Huskers at least a share of the conference title, and NU claimed the outright title about an hour later when No. 3 Wisconsin lost at No. 2 Minnesota in five sets.

Nebraska had lost just its second match of the season on Wednesday night with a five-set loss in Minneapolis that would have assured NU a share of the title.

The Huskers finished the regular season with a 27-2 overall record and will find out their NCAA Tournament path on Sunday night when the NCAA Tournament Selection Show airs on ESPNU at 8 p.m.

"I just told the team this has been one of the toughest grinds for a conference championship," Head Coach John Cook said. "I don't know how much they really appreciate and understand it, but I really want them to celebrate this as a great effort by them in the toughest conference I've ever seen."

Nebraska came into the match on a mission and con-



**Nebraska head coach John Cook holds up the Big Ten trophy.**

trolled the first two sets in 25-19 and 25-17 wins. After a sloppy start to the third set, the Huskers eventually found themselves in a 24-16 hole. The Huskers strung together a 6-0 run to make it interesting – and although they lost the set – their energy carried into the fourth set, as they sprinted ahead 7-2 and fended off a late Michigan charge for the 25-21 clincher.

Mikaela Foecke led the Huskers with 18 kills on .417 hitting. Kadie Rolfzen cele-

brated her final regular-season match as a Husker with her 46th career double-double – 11 kills and 16 digs – and became the seventh Husker all-time to surpass 1,500 career kills. Briana Holman added 11 kills and five blocks, and Amber Rolfzen had four kills and seven blocks. Andie Malloy swung for six kills. Red-shirt freshman Olivia Boender came off the bench in set three to spark the Huskers and did just that, finishing with seven kills, her most since Sept. 24

at Michigan State.

Kelly Hunter had her team-best eighth double-double of the season with 49 assists and 12 digs, and senior libero Justine Wong-Orantes led the back row once again with 17 digs. She became the first Husker in school history to surpass 1,800 career digs. Kenzie Maloney added 13 digs, and Annika Albrecht had 12.

"I can honestly say that this team really worked hard every match," Wong-Orantes said. "Going into a match with the same mindset that we wanted to take this conference and this was our goal since January. I think we did a really good job of grinding it out for 10 weeks. It's a really hard conference and a hard season. We did a really good job of just playing match for match."

The Huskers outthrew Michigan .222 to .115 and won the digs battle, 83-66, and blocks, 12-10. Claire Kieffer-Wright and Carly Skjodt led the Wolverines with 13 kills each.

**Set 1:** Nebraska's seniors came to play with Kadie Rolfzen and Malloy posting early kills, and Amber Rolfzen adding a solo block and a kill for a 5-3 Husker lead. The Huskers pulled ahead 12-7 after a Foecke kill and a block by Holman and Kadie Rolfzen. Michigan took its first timeout, and then immediately took its second timeout when Nebraska went up 14-8 on a block by Kadie and Amber Rolfzen. Malloy and Amber Rolfzen teamed up for the Huskers' fifth block of the set to give them a 15-10 lead. Michigan cut it to 16-13, but Foecke terminated and then





Nebraska players celebrate after winning their first Big Ten volleyball title since 2011.

combined for a block with Holman to put the lead back at five. The Wolverines hit long and Holman added a kill for a 20-13 lead off of a 4-0 Husker run served by Sydney Townsend. The Huskers took a 25-19 win, finishing with six blocks while holding Michigan to .020 hitting.

**Set 2:** Foecke struck for four kills to give Nebraska a 10-5 lead, but Michigan answered with three straight points to get within 10-8. Hunter turned to Foecke again, and she delivered her eighth kill of the night. Kadie Rolfzen tacked on a pair of kills and then served an ace to give the Huskers a 15-10 lead at the media timeout. A pair of Michigan kills followed by a Husker ball-handling error trimmed Nebraska's lead to two, 17-15. Kills by Foecke and Kadie Rolfzen pushed

the lead back to four at 21-17 and forced a Michigan timeout. After the break, Holman and Kadie Rolfzen combined for a stuff block, and Holman tipped home a kill for a 23-17 lead, and the Wolverines used their final timeout to try and stop the momentum. But it didn't matter, as the Huskers scored the final two points out of the timeout to end the set on a 6-0 run and win 25-17. Nebraska totaled 17 kills with just two errors for a .500 hitting percentage in the set.

**Set 3:** Michigan took a 6-2 lead after a collection of errors by the Big Red to begin the set. The Huskers reeled off four straight points to get within 8-7, with Amber Rolfzen posting a kill and a block with Hunter, and Malloy adding a kill. But Michigan responded with a 7-0 run to go up 15-7. Nebraska began

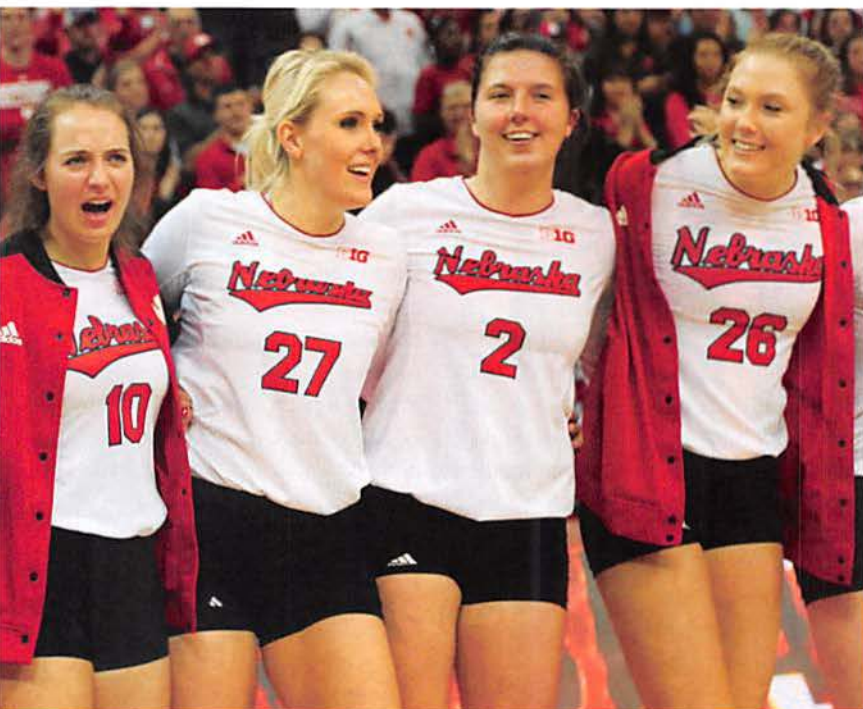
to rally with kills by Boender, Foecke and Amber Rolfzen to cut it to 15-10. But Michigan's lead went up to nine at 21-12 after a 6-2 run. A 3-0 Husker run pulled them within 22-16, but the Wolverines earned set point at 24-16. Nebraska valiantly fought off six set points, including a Kadie Rolfzen kill and ace, but Michigan finished the job at 25-22 with a Carly Skjodt kill.

**Set 4:** Nebraska carried the momentum from its comeback attempt in set three into set four, as Holman and Boender each smashed a pair of kills, and Kadie Rolfzen terminated for an early 7-2 lead. Foecke tallied two more kills to make it 14-6, and Boender pounded another for an 18-9 lead. Michigan put together a 4-1 run, but the Rolfzen twins combined for a block and a 20-13 lead. Michigan did not

go away, trimming the deficit to 21-17 and forcing a Husker timeout. After the Wolverines served wide, they came right back with three more points to cut it to 22-20. But Foecke blasted the Huskers out of the rotation, and then gave Nebraska match point at 24-20. Foecke finished off the championship with her 18th kill of the night.

**Up Next:** The NCAA Tournament Selection Show was scheduled to air on Sunday at 8 p.m. on ESPNU. The Huskers were likely to host the first and second round for the 12th-straight year. Should the Huskers be selected as one of the top-four national seeds, they would be in line to host a regional if they advance past the second round. The first and second rounds will be played December 2-3, while regionals are set for Dec. 9-10.





Clockwise from above: Hunter Atherton, Olivia Boender, Mikaela Foecke and Lauren Stivrins smile during the match against Michigan on Saturday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Husker players wear their Big Ten championship shirts and hats as they wait to receive the Big Ten trophy that they earned by going 18-2 in conference play this season. Nebraska players celebrate the school's 33rd conference championship in volleyball and first in the Big Ten since 2011. Seniors Kadie Rolfzen (6), Amber Rolfzen (5) go up for a block as junior setter Kelly Hunter watches from behind. The three Papillion-LaVista South graduates all came to NU together.





PHOTOS BY REGGIE RYDER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

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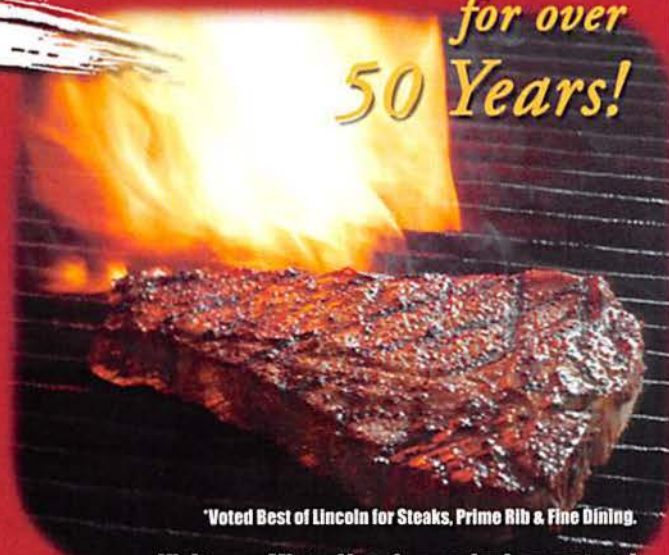
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# RIGHT AT HOME

## Kadie Rolfzen at one time wanted to go to Stanford

Story by Bob Hamar • Photo by Mitch Otto

Kadie Rolfzen and her twin sister Amber committed to the Nebraska volleyball program before they entered Papillion-La Vista South High School.

There was no doubt they wanted to be a part of the Husker program, but Kadie had different ideas at a younger age.

"I actually really wanted to go to Stanford," Kadie said. "I really don't know why. It's like Harvard or Stanford, I would never get into either one. But Amber really wanted to come to Nebraska and eventually I wanted to come."

"We just watched Nebraska play and obviously got offered and we committed. I don't know why I ever wanted to go anywhere else but here, but I did at one point."

Husker fans are certainly glad the twins both ended up in his program. Maybe it was inevitable that the two would end up in the same place. They were kind of a package deal.

"I don't know if I ever thought about that, but yeah, we were going to go to the same place," Kadie said.

It's turned out well for all parties. Kadie developed into an All-American left side hitter, until she moved to the right side and was named a first-team All-American in 2015 as the Huskers went on to win the NCAA title.

And now the Rolfzens are both seniors.

"It feels like it's flown by," coach John Cook said. "When we started recruiting them and all that, it seems like forever. It's been about half my career here. In fact it has been. That part feels long, but coaching them, no, it goes by so fast."

Kadie moved right into the starting lineup when she joined the Huskers at the start of the 2013 season. She wasn't always the All-American she eventually would become.

"She was inconsistent," Cook said. "She wasn't a great digger I don't think, she wasn't a great passer. Some nights she was a good blocker. Now I think she's a great blocker and she's become a good defensive player. She's always been a good attacker. She's become a really good server."

"If you look at all six rotations, she's really raised her level in all those areas."

Although she is leading the Huskers in kills this season, Kadie has had her off nights like anyone else. But when things aren't going well in one area, she excels in another to help the Huskers win.

"It's all the work she's done in the past three years to get to that point as a player," Cook said. "That's what makes her a premier player on our team, in the conference and in the country. She can struggle and still find ways to help us win."

"She's doing everything really well, at a very high level. She's really matured and blossomed into a great all-around player."

Rolfzen led the Huskers heading into the final week of the regular season with 3.11 kills per set while hitting .292. She also stood third in blocking with 80 total blocks.

"She's a first-team All-American. She needed to play like that every night," Cook said. "She's doing a nice job. That was one of the challenges at the beginning of the year. We wanted her to become a great six-rotation player. She's doing a really good job at all the skills."

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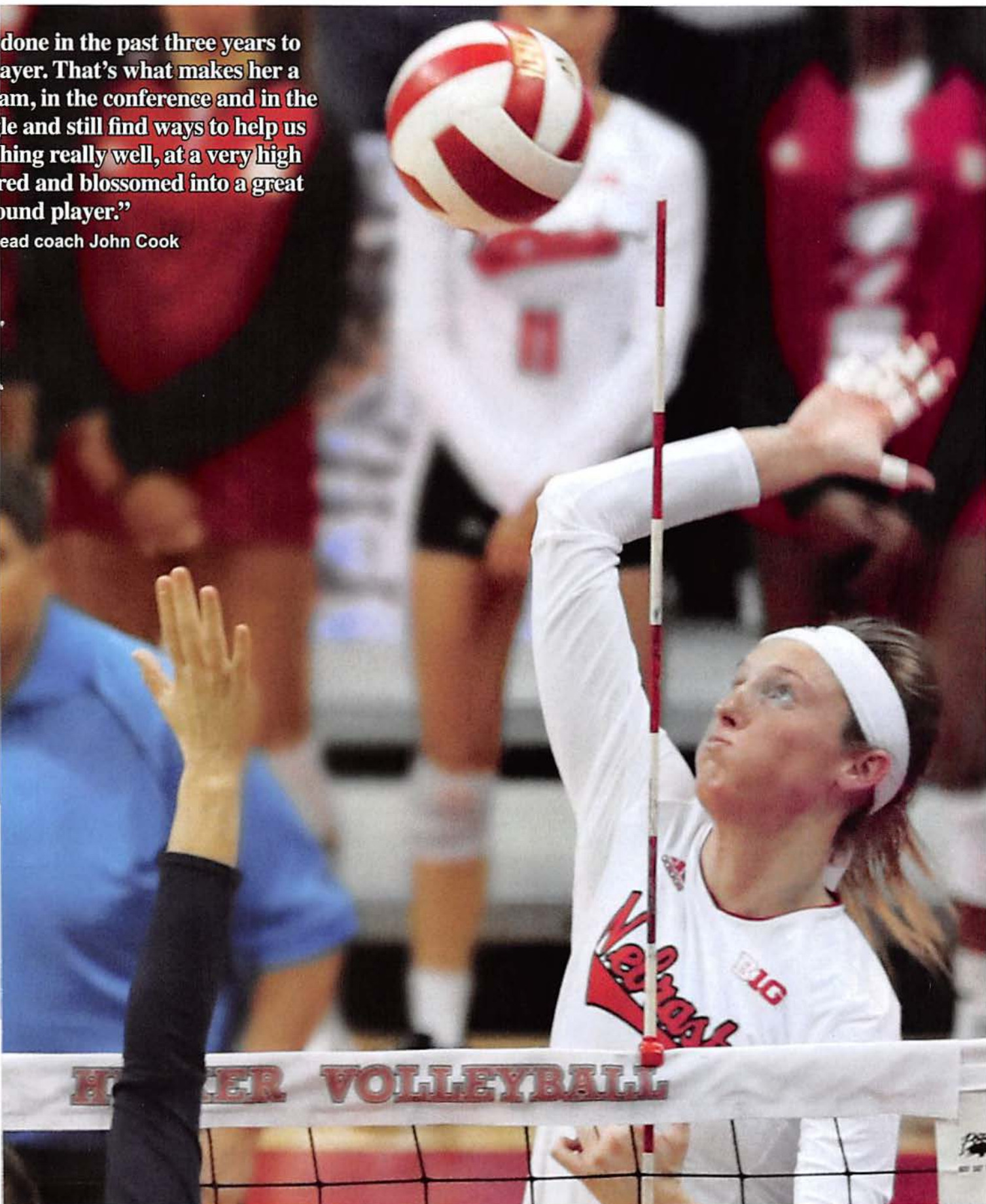


Senior Kadie Rolfzen once dreamed of S



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Head coach John Cook

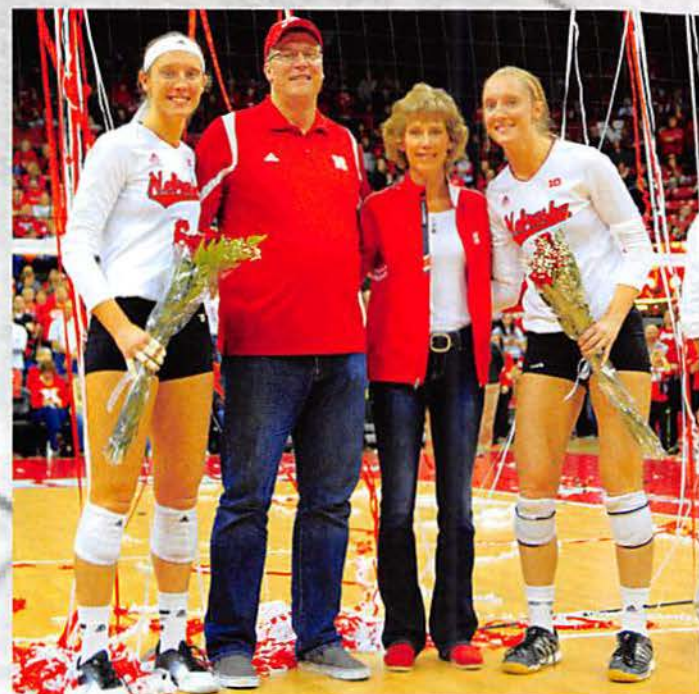


anford but she is glad she came to Nebraska. She is leading the Huskers in kills while also hitting .292 and stands third on the team in blocks.



# Special Senior Night

Nebraska honors Rolfzens, Malloy, Wong-Orantes



Clockwise from above: Kadie Rolfzen, Mark Rolfzen, Teresa Rolfzen and Amber Rolfzen were honored before the Michigan match on Saturday. Winning the Big Ten Conference title at home on Senior Night made it a particularly memorable night for Nebraska's four seniors — the Rolfzens, Justin Wong-Orantes and Andie Malloy. Wong-Orantes waves to the Bob Devaney Sports Center crowd as she enters with her family. Andie Malloy poses for a photo with her family.



# NEBRASKA VOLLEYBALL NOTEBOOK

Compiled by Bob Hamar • Photos by Reggie Ryder

## MALLOY FITS RIGHT IN

Four Husker seniors had their Senior Night at the Michigan match. Kadie and Amber Rolfzen along with Justine Wong-Orantes were part of the No. 1-ranked recruiting class for 2013.

Andie Malloy came along much later. Malloy joined the Huskers for her senior season as a graduate student last winter after transferring from Baylor.

"It seems like she's been here for four years," Cook said. "It was the smoothest, most seamless transfer I've ever (seen). She's just like part of the family. It's just like she was meant to be."

Cook admits he didn't have any expectations out of Malloy. He knew she could play a number of different positions. The challenge as figuring out where the Huskers could use her the most.

"I knew she was a good volleyball player," Cook said. "The expectations were to give us depth and see where she could fit in. She's played right, she's been a setter, she's played left. At Baylor she played middle, left and right."

"She's just a good volleyball player and we had to figure out where we could fit her in."

Cook said Malloy has gotten better this year.

"She's continued to get better throughout the season," Cook said. "Her blocking has gotten better. She's understanding how to attack in the Big Ten. She works really hard."

## LARRY THE CABLE GUY VISITS

The Huskers got a big-time movie star to come visit their practice a couple of weeks ago.

Larry the Cable Guy, a well-known Husker fan, stopped by after being invited by Cook. It all came about after freshman middle blocker Lauren Stivrins told Cook that musician Chris Brown was around when she was visiting Southern Cal.

"I said, 'We have movie stars here too,'" Cook said. "She said, 'Oh no we don't.' I said, 'Just wait. I'll get you a movie star.'"

"I texted Larry the Cable Guy and he showed up. It was awesome. We took pictures. He stayed and told stories. Lauren was very excited."

Cook said he saw online that Nebraska has more famous peo-

ple show up for their athletic events than any school in the Big Ten. Larry the Cable Guy gets to a lot of Husker events and attends just about every home football game.

"It was fun," Cook said Larry's visit. "I've known him for a long time. He's been in our locker room, before and after matches. He follows Husker sports. If you follow his tweets, he always knows what's going on. That's one of the cool things about Nebraska."



Andie Malloy waves to the crowd during her Senior Night announcement.

## OUT OF SYSTEM IMPORTANCE

The Huskers swept Iowa on Nov. 19 in a match where they out hit the Hawkeyes .314 to .146. Cook was also pleased with six service aces against just two errors.

"We served Iowa really tough," Cook said. "I mean six aces, two errors. That's one way you can measure it, but also they were in system about 10 percent of the time."

Cook watches the percentage of out of system plays each match. He said offensively, he would like his team to be in system about 45 percent of the time.

"If we can hit that, we're going to have a good night," Cook said. "We were about 38 or 39 percent against Iowa."

## HUSKERS THIRD IN RPI

Nebraska entered the final week of the regular season third in the

RPI behind Wisconsin and Texas.

The Huskers swept both those teams earlier this season.

"That just reaffirms to me that the RPI is a mess and it has been for years," Cook said.

But, Cook said, it doesn't bother him.

"It used to," Cook said. "I don't worry about it any more. I just worry about Nebraska volleyball and our team. I don't worry about that kind of stuff."

## BUSBOOM-KELLY HIRED AS LOUISVILLE COACH

Nebraska announced on Sunday that former player and five-year assistant coach Dani Busboom-Kelly would be leaving at the end of the season to take the head coaching job at Louisville. Busboom-Kelly had served as an assistant coach at Louisville before coming to Nebraska.



## 2016 Schedule

### VERT Challenge at Eugene, Oregon

Aug. 26	Florida	W, 3-1
Aug. 27	Texas	W, 3-0

### Nebraska Invite at Lincoln, Nebraska

Sept. 2	Iowa State	W, 3-0
Sept. 3	Oregon State	W, 3-0

### Lobo Classic at Albuquerque, N.M.

Sept. 8	Montreal (Exh.)	W, 3-0
Sept. 9	Arkansas	W, 3-0
Sept. 10	New Mexico	W, 3-0

### Ameritas Challenge at Devaney Center

Sept. 16	Montana State	W, 3-0
Sept. 16	Gonzaga	W, 3-0
Sept. 17	Creighton	W, 3-1

Sept. 23 at Michigan W, 3-0

Sept. 24 at Mich. State W, 3-2

Sept. 28 at Illinois W, 3-0

Oct. 1 Ohio State L, 3-1

Oct. 7 Indiana W, 3-0

Oct. 9 Purdue W, 3-0

Oct. 14 at Ohio State W, 3-1

Oct. 16 at Maryland W, 3-0

Oct. 21 Wisconsin W, 3-0

Oct. 23 Minnesota W, 3-2

Oct. 28 Illinois W, 3-0

Oct. 29 Northwestern W, 3-0

Nov. 4 at Penn State W, 3-2

Nov. 5 at Rutgers W, 3-0

Nov. 9 Iowa W, 3-0

Nov. 12 at Indiana W, 3-0

Nov. 16 Penn State W, 3-0

Nov. 19 at Iowa W, 3-0

Nov. 23 at Minnesota L, 3-2

Nov. 26 Michigan W, 3-1

Dec. 1-3 NCAA 1st, 2nd Rds TBD

Dec. 9-10 NCAA Regionals - TBD

Dec. 15 NCAA Semis at Columbus

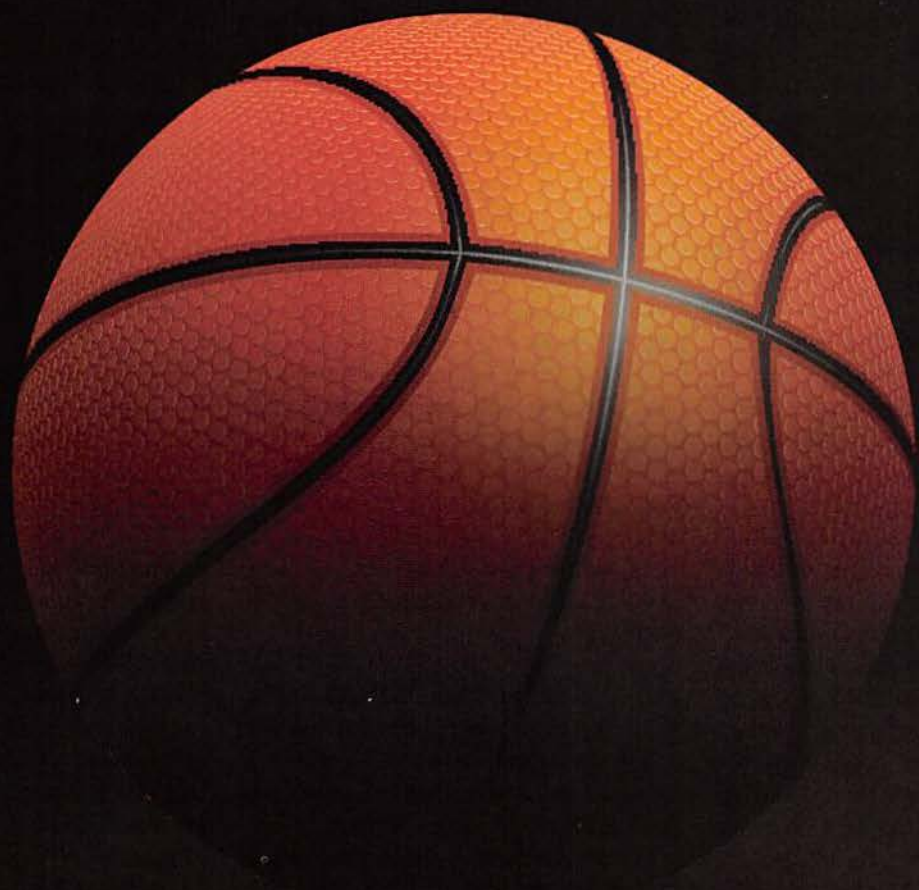
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## MILES WANTS MORROW TO BE TEAM'S BODYGUARD

When sophomore power forward Edward Morrow stepped onto campus last year, Nebraska Head Coach Tim Miles had one objective for Morrow every time he stepped on the court. Be the strongest guy at any give time.

"When he was on the floor last year, I wanted him to do one thing," Miles said. "I want you to be the toughest guy on the floor and, I think, he relished that. I think, he embraced it and, I think, he was the toughest guy on the floor a lot. He's still brings that mentality."

But Morrow's season was filled with ups and downs battling the injury bug last season. Miles said he's become stronger in the offseason but must work on finding open areas to get the ball.

"As I look at Edward, he's still explosive, he's stronger, he's still getting himself to play in a crowd and he needs to learn how to play out of that crowd better," Miles said. "He's making great progressions for us that way."

Morrow took those issues into the offseason. Morrow worked not only on his inside moves but how to become a threat on the perimeter to open up lanes near the basket.

"One of the biggest things is just being patient," Morrow said. "Letting the game come to me. During the offseason, I worked on a lot of perimeter and post moves, being able to stretch my game out and making those mid-range shots. Just being a better passer and score away from the basket."

Miles said he wants Morrow, while inside the paint, to become sophomore guard Glynn Watson's "bodyguard" while on the court.

"Every little guard that's good needs a bodyguard," Miles said. "We know Watson's good so he better have somebody that can protect him out there and that's Ed's job too."

## WATSON AN EAGER LEARNER

Nebraska's 65-54 victory over Louisiana Tech was the Huskers first test of the year but not all players were happy with the results after the game.

Point guard Glynn Watson Jr., one of Nebraska's leaders, had one of his worst performances of his short collegiate career. The sophomore went 1-of-9 from the field (0-4 from three-pointers) for two points with no assists and three turnovers in his 32 minutes of play.

Nebraska Head Coach Tim Miles said instantly the next morning Watson wanted to watch film and go over his mistakes.

"Let me tell you something about Glynn Watson," Miles said. "At 10 am on Sunday morning, I am in church and my pocket buzzes and it's Glynn saying, 'when can I watch tape this morning?'. A lot of college kids aren't up at that time on a Sunday morning."

"I just think that he's a willing, eager learner that wanted to see the tape and my perspective. As a team we watch the whole game, but he and I watch all his offensive possessions and just talked about some different things. He's just not doing a few things and I think he has a clearer understanding of when I want him to attack."

Miles said you have to be careful what you tell Watson, who started 16 games last season, because he won't forget it.

"You got to be careful on what you tell him because he will listen, which isn't always the case for players in general, and so he will do what you tell him to do to a full," Miles said. "Like I'll say, 'the role guy is wide open' and he will look for the role guy the whole time because he wants to please and he wants to do it right but we need him to attack."

## HUSKERS SEE POSITIVES IN UCLA LOSS

The Nebraska basketball team stuck with UCLA throughout the whole night on Friday but it was a tail of two halves that hurt the Huskers.

The Huskers settled for outside shots in the first half and couldn't keep up the pace. UCLA went into halftime with a 38-25 lead, mainly because Nebraska shot 28.6% from the field in the first half.

"I thought we were tentative in the first half and that is not like us, second half is more of a snapshot of what we're like," Nebraska Head Coach Tim Miles said. "But every time we got the game down to 2 or 3 points, they answered. (Bryce) Alford made some tough shots, (Aaron) Holiday made some shots, and they hurt us. We didn't get enough outside shooting, quite frankly. Outside of Glynn (Watson) and Tai (Webster), the other guys were 1-14. You can't beat a ranked team semi on the road with that kind of production, or lack thereof."

Watson finished with 27 points and Webster finished with 19 to lead the Huskers. Nebraska's three freshmen showed growing pains at times but Webster said the ups and downs the freshman went through will only

help them in the future.

"I feel encouraged more than anything," Webster said. "This is a great learning curve for our young guys, I think this will really stay in the back of their minds and we will only move forward from here."

Nebraska started driving the ball inside on the Bruins in the second half leading to easy buckets. They cut the lead down to a one possession a handful of times but UCLA took advantage of the Huskers mistakes each time.

Nebraska shot 47.5% in the second half in their 82-71 loss. The Huskers will face Virginia Tech on Sunday for third place at the Wooden Legacy Tournament.

"We told them before that it was going to be amazing the growth we were going to see in three days win, lose, or draw," Miles said. "And I believe that it will continue. Tomorrow we can go mope around and hang out with Goofy, Minnie, and Mickey, that's fine. But on Sunday, we need to be ready to go in and go to battle."

## HUSKERS NAMED TO 2017 ADVOCARE INVITATIONAL FIELD

The Huskers men's basketball team will spend next Thanksgiving weekend in Florida, as Nebraska will be one of the eight teams for the 2017 AdvoCare Invitational announced Friday.

The eight-team field for the 2017 tournament – to be held Thursday, Friday and Sunday, Nov. 23, 24 and 26, at HP Field House at ESPN Wide World of Sports near Orlando, Fla. – will include Long Beach State, Marist, Missouri, Nebraska, Oregon State, St. John's, UCF and West Virginia.

Three of the eight teams played in post-season tournaments last season, including Oregon State and West Virginia, which made the NCAA Tournament in 2016, and Long Beach State, which qualified for the NIT. The 2017 appearance will mark the Huskers' first-ever appearance in the AdvoCare Invitational and the fourth ESPN-sponsored tournament in the last five seasons.

For Husker fans, the field features a potential matchup with an old rival, as the Huskers and Missouri could meet for the first time since Nebraska joined the Big Ten. The series dates back to 1908, but the teams have not met since the 2010-11 campaign.

While the Huskers and Tigers have met 119 times, NU has played the remainder of the field just 14 times and none since a win over Oregon State in 2009.





# A Stroll Down Rasmussen Road With **CINDY ROETHEMEYER**

1998-2002 Softball Player

Column by Butch Rasmussen • Huskers Illustrated File Photo

Imagine a little 5-year-old girl signing up for her first organized softball team, coming up thru the ranks, learning her craft. She blinks twice and does a pirouette and the next thing she knows she's the starting third bagger for the Nebraska Cornhuskers Women's Softball team.

That's the way it played out for Cindy Roethemeyer, a hot shot softball player from North Platte.

During her four year career at Nebraska, Roethemeyer started every inning of every game at third base and finished in third-place all-time with 252 games played. And here's a stat nobody wants except for what it's worth to get on base: she finished sixth all-time in career-hit-by-pitches with 15.

It seems the hot corner was certainly hot for Roethemeyer since she finished her career second in single-season assists with 160 in 1998. She surely handled a lot of hot shots and made a lot of accurate long throws to first base and that takes some talent.

Roethemeyer was first team All-Big 12 at third base in 2001, made the All Big 12 tourney team in 1999, the All-Region first team in 2001 and earned honors with her academics by being named to the first team All-Academic Big 12 team for three of her four years as a Husker. The University likes to call them student-athletes and she sure fit that mold.

Roethemeyer was named team co-captain her senior year in 2002.

It was the best of times for Roethemeyer as she lived out a childhood dream of playing division I softball for the Huskers, playing in two College World Series in 1998 and 2002 and helping her team to a perfect 20-0 record to win the Big 12 championship in 1998.

Her Nebraska team was featured on ESPN during the College World Series and earned a plug for her home town when the ESPN announcers during the game mentioned she was from North Platte, Nebraska, and that the town was known for its Nebraskaland Days celebration.

Roethemeyer wasn't just a strong armed



Cindy Roethemeyer (5) played in two College World Series as a member of the Nebraska softball team.

third baseman though.

She could also swing the bat, and smashed a game winning home-run to defeat defending national champion Oklahoma in Big 12 play in 2001.

Add that memory to the one where she drove in the winning run against Michigan in 2002 in a one-run victory and she has a mental scrapbook any division one college athlete could be proud to own.

Highlights of Roethemeyer's career include the opportunity to match skills against future Olympians Jennie Finch, Cat Osterman, Amanda Freed, Natasha Watley, Jessica Mendoza and Crystal Bustos.

The bump in the road came during winter conditioning her freshman year when she popped her left ACL while playing football at Cook Pavillion.

It happened again to the right ACL in her sixth game of the 2000 season against Stanford. She was leading off first base when a failed bunt attempt caused her to turn

quickly to get back to first and she went down in pain.

Roethemeyer was known as an excellent defensive player in her day.

"You have to have a good defensive third baseman in order to have success in the Big 12 Conference," Roethemeyer said, "and I took a lot of pride in my defensive game and knew that this was my best opportunity to be most valuable to my team."

She says she tried to be a team leader by example. She tried to lead by having a good work ethic, attitude, and love for the game.

One thing we can say for sure: There aren't many young athletes who can say they started all four years of their eligibility for the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

Cindy Roethemeyer is now Cindy Roethemeyer Jones living in North Platte after finishing a stellar softball career in Lincoln. She's married to husband Ryan, coach and teacher at Maxwell High School.



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